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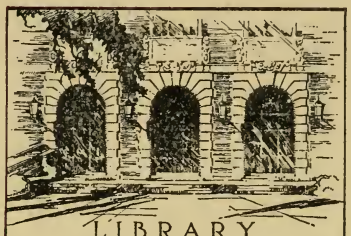

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THE WHITE HOODS.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
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New-Street-Square.

THE

WHITE HOODS;

An Historical Romance.

BY

ANNA ELIZA BRAY,

LATE

MRS. CHARLES STOTHARD,

AUTHOR OF "DE FOIX;" "LETTERS WRITTEN DURING A TOUR THROUGH NORMANDY AND BRITANNY;" "MEMOIRS OF THE LATE CHARLES A. STOTHARD, F.S.A." &c. &c.

"Be brave then: for your captain is brave,
And vows reformation. ——
There shall be no money: all shall eat
And drink on my score; and I will apparel them
All in one livery, that they may agree like brothers,
And worship me their lord." SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE WHITE HOODS.

CHAPTER I.

We must now for a time leave the artful instigators of rebellion to pursue their infamous plots, whilst we return to the amiable daughter of one of their leaders, the course of the narrative having already detained us longer from the mention of her than could be wished.

Anna, animated with the most lively sense of filial duty, had hitherto vainly attempted to withdraw her father from his dangerous associates; and now almost despairing of success, after her last painful interview with him, she had devoutly attended the vespers of St. Nicholas, to put up her fervent prayers to Heaven, the Virgin, and the Saints, for his deliverance. Anna had long since determined that nothing on her

part should be wanting that could contribute to her father's safety, or his comfort, and that he should not have to plead her neglect of the Earl's injunctions, as an excuse for continuing his desperate enterprise, since she had made John Lyon fully acquainted with all that had passed between herself and Lewis de Male.

Actuated by this resolution, she still wore about her neck, though contrary to her own feelings of delicacy, the rich gold chain which Lewis had insisted should be so worn as a pledge of hope and love. Morever, she was not ignorant, that her still retaining the fatal token was a circumstance in the Earl's compact, which obliged her to see him, and to listen to his protestations of affection, whenever he pleased to renew the intercourse.

Anna was also aware that his present apparent neglect of her had solely arisen from the pressing and incessant occupations which had employed the Earl, the Countess of Artois, and their council, since the day of the archery, when the insurrection had broken out in a

manner to excite the most serious apprehension. To the faction of the White Hoods she was indebted for his present forbearance; but as the Earl could now no longer be ignorant that John Lyon (to whom he had so lately granted a pardon for his life) belonged to them, Anna too justly feared that the resentment of Lewis de Male, for such shameless ingratitude, might fall upon herself.

Busied with these melancholy reflections, she quitted the church. The idea of Henry de Cassel, too, presented itself to her mind, and with that idea came hope; for though Henry was mysterious in all his actions, and, she was compelled to admit, even in his character, yet there was so much frankness, such an ardent affection in his manner and in his expressions, that she could not but think him honest at heart, and that he might prove an instrument, under the guidance of Heaven, to assist, perhaps, in delivering her father from the dangers with which he was encompassed. So great was the present anxiety of her mind, that she resolved to trust Henry (as far as her sense of honour

and of duty would allow) with a knowledge of her affairs.

Anna had never yet ventured to communicate to her father her extraordinary connection with Henry de Cassel; she had often determined to tell him the whole truth, but whenever she made an attempt to introduce the subject, John Lyon, solely occupied with his dangerous speculations, had either driven her from his presence, or harshly bid her hold her peace, saying he had now no leisure to listen to idle tales. The confidence which an innocent and bashful girl felt desirous of reposing in the bosom of a parent, was thus chilled, or sternly repelled; and latterly, since the horrid scene of the midnight council, Anna had determined to withhold the communication till a fitter time, in the hope to preserve Henry as a friend to her father, who might serve him at his need; since she felt that possibly the hour might soon arrive, when no one (but Henry) would, even for her sake, afford the least countenance to a man attainted for treason. In her last interview with Henry he had talked as confidently as ever

of claiming her of her father at a future period, and yet for the time being he studiously shunned all intercourse with him as he would the presence of his greatest foe. Under these circumstances it may seem extraordinary that Anna, who had so much delicacy of feeling, should again wish to meet Henry. She knew her conduct was liable to the imputation of imprudence even in its most favourable view; but the distressing peculiarities of her situation must be her excuse. She had neither friend nor counsellor; her father left her to herself to associate with the most worthless men in Ghent; and she looked on Henry as the only human creature who, in this emergency, could afford her one feeling of sympathy or comfort. She thought of his advice what to do, what to propose to save her father, with the same desperate hope as drowning men feel when they catch at the only slight branch that is near them, in the vain effort to shun inevitable death.

Anna was in this frame of mind when she perceived her steps were followed by some one cautiously muffled to avoid being known; and

never doubting it was Henry, she slackened her pace to give him time to overtake her. In a few seconds, Jaques, the faithful domestic of her lover, was by her side. He respectfully told his errand in a few words, and conjured her, instead of returning home, to bend her steps to the hermitage of St. John, that stood at a short distance from the walls of Ghent, as his master had some communication to make to her of the greatest consequence, which would not admit of delay. Anna promised immediate compliance; and directed her walk towards the appointed spot, as Jaques hastened to inform Henry de Cassel she would there await his arrival.

The hermitage was situated in the centre of a small wood, half way between Ghent and the palace of Andrighien. Although the trees were suffered to grow wild, it contained several walks and avenues that had been formed amid them, for the benefit, in point of health and amusement, of the inhabitants of that city. As Anna advanced towards its precincts, with an anxious mind and a heavy heart, she could not but remark, that the day itself was quite in unison

with the state of her own feelings. All seemed dull and melancholy; the clouds hung lowering around, obscuring the sun, whilst they threatened heavy showers before it set. Not a single person crossed her path; the commotions in the city seemed to have wholly occupied the attention of its inhabitants; so that whilst the unruly rabble paraded the streets, those disposed to peace confined themselves to their own dwellings.

As she turned into the path which led to the centre of the wood, the wind whistled and howled in sad cadence, and seemed, to her vivid fancy, like the voice of some spirit, to deplore the lost hopes, and the unhappy fate which attended her. Anna drew near the little hermitage dedicated to St. John. It was an ancient, and now a ruinous Gothic building, which had been constructed over the head of a small fountain that rushed from a rock, and falling in gentle murmurs down its grey and mossy sides, glided into a stream, and was soon lost to the eye, from its intricate windings through the wood. This stream was consecrated by superstition for the miraculous power of its waters, which were said to heal all diseases,

if duly visited with faith and prayer, especially on the eve of St. John's day. A hermit had once been the priest and the guardian of the fountain; but during the public disturbances in the time of the late Jacob Von Artaveld, the cell had been dismantled and suffered to go to ruin, so that nothing more than a mouldering wall, and the ivy-grown fragment of a fretted archway, now remained. But the carved image of the good St. John, the patron of the spring, yet stood within a small niche above it, and, with a raised hand and bending brow, seemed still to bless the genial fountain.

As Anna approached this consecrated spot (which was said still to be the scene of miraculous events), she observed a bright appearance, like that of an illuminated body, which seemed to rest upon the very source. A sudden fear seized her, and in despite of all her efforts to subdue her feelings, something like a superstitious dread stole upon her senses. But as she approached still nearer, this apprehension was completely dispelled, by discovering that the appearance proceeded from a natural cause.

The masses of dense vapour which hitherto obscured the sun, had partially broken and rolled onward, and a gleam of the sun, bright and fiery, had suddenly darted forth, and found its brilliant reflection in the waters as they burst leaping and bounding from the rock. But transient as beautiful, before Anna reached the spot the beam was gone, and the stream poured on amid the melancholy twilight, in a uniform and unillumined course. "Alas," said Anna, as the circumstance afforded a subject of contemplation to a mind so feeling as her own, "that transient beam, I fear, is but an emblem of my hopes, they delude me with their brightness for a moment, and then leave me for ever a prey to the sad thoughts of my own heart, for my fate seems as dreary as the present hour."

She sighed heavily, and took her seat upon a fragment of the ruins, watching, with an anxious eye, the little pathway that led through the wood to the fountain, and listening to every breeze that rustled or stirred the leaves, in the hope to hear the sound of footsteps. Her expectation was at length relieved by the appearance of one, who

eagerly came towards her, and in the next moment, Henry de Cassel pressed her to his bosom. He looked upon her with a countenance, in which the most ardent affection seemed mingled with anxious fears, and struck by the pale and care-worn aspect of Anna, he said in a tone of impassioned feeling, "Dearest love, this must not be. — Oh let me, let me rescue you from scenes that I suspect destroy your peace."

"Alas," replied Anna, "my peace depends upon my father, and I fear I must not look to find it."

"He is unworthy such a child," exclaimed Henry with some warmth; "but let me save you, Anna."

"Do not speak of him thus," said the unhappy girl, "do not say so to me, remember he *is* my father, the author of my being, and whilst I have life and strength, I will never forsake him; and do not think (she added in a manner peculiarly expressive of her feelings,) because I hastened here to meet you, that I would therefore forget the duty I owe to a father. No, Henry, it is perhaps for his sake alone, in the hope that you

might serve him, that I have ventured so far to neglect the prudence I ought to observe, and that maidenly restraint which is ever the guard of innocence. The evening draws on apace, and I must hasten back ere the city gates are closed. Tell me briefly then, I conjure you, what it is you would communicate of so much import. Does it relate to my father's safety?"

"It does indeed," replied Henry; "but I fear to distress you. Yet you must know it, and this night; for to-morrow it would be too late. On this night alone depends your father's safety and your own. I have the power, and I would use it, to preserve you both."

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Anna, "speak, tell me what has chanced. I feared something dreadful, for my father has been unusually busied to-day: he appeared, too, lost in his own thoughts; and but now I left him closeted in deep conference with Du Bois."

"Perhaps," replied Henry, "he has gained some knowledge of what I would communicate to you; but he can have no power to shun the danger so securely as I could shield him from it,

and for your sake I would venture my own life to preserve your father's."

Trembling with emotion, and impatient to know the worst that Henry could communicate, Anna clasped her hands together, and conjured him to tell her all, to hide nothing from her, assuring him she could support the recital, whatever it might prove.

"When Philip Von Artaveld," said Henry, "held an interview with the Earl of Flanders, he behaved so nobly, spoke with so much courage, address, and moderation, that he procured from Lewis de Male concessions that he would have granted to no one else. In return for these concessions, the Earl demanded that the rebellious bands should surrender their arms, cast off their white hoods, and that their leaders should be delivered up to his mercy. But Philip would not betray the party he had espoused, and only consented to this measure on receiving a promise from Lewis, that the lives of these unhappy leaders should be spared; in short, that they should be dismissed after receiving a reprimand. Satisfied with this assurance, Von Artaveld

returned to Ghent. But no sooner was he gone, than the Countess of Artois and Gilbert Matthew, both the deadly enemies of your father, represented to the Earl, that John Lyon and Peter du Bois could not be included in the treaty, since they were each attainted traitors, to whom the law of Ghent forbade mercy, and therefore the promise so rashly given to Von Artaveld, however it secured the other leaders, could not apply to them. And your father having continued to carry on his dangerous plots, and insurrection, after the favour Lewis had so lately shewn him in granting a free pardon, was strongly urged in bitter terms against him. In fine, the Countess and Gilbert so artfully wrought upon the Earl's mind, that to-morrow morning the bailiff of Ghent, Roger d'Auterme, is to demand the persons of John Lyon and Peter du Bois in the public market, where he will proclaim them traitors; and there can be, I think, but little hope, that either Margaret of Artois or Gilbert Matthew will ever leave the Earl at peace till both these unhappy men suffer the penalty of the laws."

"Oh holy Virgin!" exclaimed Anna, "what can be done? Save him, save but my father, and my gratitude, my love, are yours for ever."

"It is in the hope to save him that I am now here with you, Anna," replied Henry. "But first hear all I would tell you. As Von Artaveld, no doubt, will deem this measure a breach of the promised treaty on the part of the Earl, it is to be feared that a youth so spirited will have recourse to arms, and that a general civil strife will follow. Let me then save you too, Anna, from the horrors of such a scene. If your father will but consent before to-morrow, you and he shall both be placed in safety beyond the power of your worst enemies; and soon after this event, I hope to appear before him, as I am, no longer mysterious, but your open, your sincere and zealous friend."

"How, which way," said Anna, with eagerness; "speak, but speak — tell me how you will preserve my father's life."

"Hasten back to Ghent," replied Henry; "tell your father all I have imparted to you, and bid him leave the city before the gates are

closed for the night: bid him come as privately as it is possible, accompanied only by you. Seek this very fountain, where, about midnight, I will join you, with a few brave and trusty friends, whom I dare trust in part with my design. We will conduct you as far as the port of Ostend; a vessel there waits but for my orders to set sail with whomsoever I shall place on board, for I have such an influence with the master that I can command his obedience. He will carry you to a port in Holland, where you may remain, secure from all danger, till the times wear a better aspect in this country. And I will take care to furnish you with the means, that neither your father nor yourself shall feel the hard necessities of exiles; and then, Anna, the day will come when I may hope to restore you to peace, to claim you, to ——"

"Kind, generous, dearest Henry," said Anna. "But I will not thank you now, for all thanks would feebly speak my feelings. But do not let us lose a moment in vain speculations upon the future: I will instantly seek my father, tell him all you say, all you would do for him; and oh!

Henry, my gratitude, nay, why should I dissemble, and at such a moment, why should I blush to tell my benefactor, that my affection for one so generous can cease but with life. Yet," continued Anna, in an altered tone, as a sudden alarm seemed to present itself to her mind, "yet I much fear ——"

"Fear what, Anna?" said Henry; "I have offered nothing but what I have the means to accomplish."

"Alas," replied Anna, in a tone of despondency, "I fear my father *will not* consent — that he will not accept your offered terms of safety. Peter du Bois rules his measures with an unlimited influence; they have been so much together to-day, so many of these wretched White Hoods have been cautiously stealing to our house, that I fear, Henry, my father may be tempted by Du Bois to provide for his own safety by some terrible means of their own seeking. I must not deceive you; my father may not come to this fountain as you direct."

"Then," answered Henry de Cassel, "if such should be his blind determination, do *you* come

alone, and let me save you from the horrors, the dangers that await you. I will convey you, young, beautiful, innocent as you are, with the purity of a brother's love, to some convent remote from Ghent, where you may rest concealed and in safety till happier times arrive."

"No," cried Anna, "never. I will never desert my father; and though I would not share in his guilt, yet I will not leave him without one friend, one honest counsellor, although he does not heed me. I will not fly from him to spare myself a share in his punishment or in his fate."

"Good God!" exclaimed Henry, "do you know what may await you; think upon Earl Lewis." Anna was silent; Henry looked at her a moment, and then added, in a tone of voice tremulous with agitation, "Nay, what am I to think! Oh Anna, is there — can there be *another* motive for this refusal. Is there a motive to which I am a stranger — can the Earl — can you be so blinded — gracious Heaven!" he continued, as he looked wildly upon her, "you wear his very token upon your neck. Oh Anna, is *that* a fit ornament for a

bosom that would guard its innocence? Did I not warn you to avoid such a badge of infamy and danger? and now — even now, you display the accursed and glittering toy before my eyes."

"Be patient, Henry," said Anna, with evident confusion; "I know it is a sad token, but what — what could I do. I — it is nothing, it ——"

"Nothing!" reiterated Henry. "Is a token of Lewis de Male's love *nothing?* Thus worn, is it nothing? You will drive me to madness. You will make me suspect the mind which dwells in that form, which I once thought so pure, to be no better than the vain spirit that betrays thousands of your sex to misery and ruin. Anna, I would rather tear you from my heart, I would rather see you dead at my feet, than think you could so betray yourself and me. Tell me then, in pity to the agony I feel at this moment, tell me wherefore that token, which I know to be from Lewis, hangs thus about your bosom."

Anna, grieved to the very soul by these un-

kind suspicions, and surprised by the vehemence of Henry's manner, looked upon him with an expression of astonishment and sorrow blended in her countenance; and could only assure him that he had cruelly misconstrued her motive, and injured her feelings, by groundless suspicions. Still she was silent about the chain of gold; she could not deny it was the Earl's token; her manner became embarrassed, for she felt that both her duty to her father (since he had forced her to consent that she would listen to Lewis), and her own plighted word to keep secret what had passed, forbade her to communicate it even to Henry de Cassel. And now, with every wish to vindicate her own character from the effects of one of those sudden fits of jealousy which so frequently spring up in the bosom of true affection, she was compelled to remain silent, when a word would have proved her innocence.

Anna would not stoop to evasion, and anxious to avoid a subject so painfully embarrassing, she once more spoke of her father, but still doubtfully as to his acceptance of the aid De Cassel

had offered for his safety. The affectionate Henry, somewhat soothed by the earnest though hesitating manner in which she had endeavoured to quiet his suspicions, rejoiced at the idea that there was yet, perhaps, a faint ray of hope, a possibility that her father might consent to his proposal, which would enable him to remove Anna from a country so dangerous to her peace and to his own, for he could never think either secured till she should be beyond the power of Lewis de Male.

The evening fast closed in upon them, and the lovers soon parted, and though they did so without farther reproach, still doubt and an unsatisfied feeling of anxiety rested in the bosom of either. Henry accompanied Anna till she arrived near the gates of the city, and, as he left her, solemnly renewed his promise that he would be ready in attendance at the fountain in the wood, should her father resolve to escape the fate which was prepared for him. Anna sighed as she said she could only hope in Heaven, for she feared he might not come, but if he did so, she would bear him company.

With a palpitating heart, and a mind distracted with anxiety and conflicting feelings, Anna hastened through the streets of Ghent as she returned home in quest of her father. We shall not attempt to describe the agony she suffered when, upon arriving at his door, she learnt he had quitted the house with Peter du Bois, and, after vainly making every enquiry to find out where he might be, she heard the bells of the different churches strike the midnight hour, yet her father was not returned.

CHAP. II.

Every thing had been arranged by the activity of John Lyon and Peter du Bois for the execution of their schemes. Money had been distributed where it was thought necessary, and all the leaders of the White Hoods were duly given to understand that, unless they would resist the expected demands of the Earl, they could have no security, not only for the lives of John Lyon and Peter du Bois, but also for their own.

On the next morning, the former headed a considerable body of these people, whilst the latter, and a few trusty adherents, who were in the secret, set forth at a very early hour to meet Sir Simon de Bête, fully determined to thwart his intended appearance before the populace, since his supposed detention was still to be insisted upon as a pretext for discontent against the Earl.

Sir Simon, who had now just emerged from captivity, clearly bore about his altered person

the marks of a prison, where, although he had been well treated, the *idea* of his degradation, and the little value which was set upon his consequence, preyed upon his spirits, and had affected his health. Reduced as he was in flesh, with a most woe-begone aspect, he might now be compared to some well-fed, pampered cur, that, stolen from his master, had at last returned from the clutches of the thief, where his back had grown acquainted with the stick, and his stomach with famine.

Notwithstanding all his misfortunes, neither the good-nature nor the importance of the little goldsmith had forsaken him, and he comforted himself for past misfortunes with the idea of the bustle and consequence of a public entry after his captivity. The shout of the populace, the greetings of friends, the harangues to the citizens, the triumphant return to his own house, &c. &c., were all things of so much relative importance, that the expectation of them almost counterbalanced the evils the worthy burgomaster had experienced in his prison.

It was with a comical expression, therefore, of

dole and exultation mingled together, that he joined his friend and escort, Peter du Bois, who had promised to conduct Sir Simon to the market-place with all due observance. The goldsmith now complained of some hardship, and anon expatiated on the pleasure and commotion his return to Ghent would occasion, and again he inveighed against his oppressors. "No Peter," said Sir Simon, as they drew near the walls of Ghent, "never was there man of my standing, having the rule of such a commercial city as this, yet so misused. Thrust into a prison, like a common burgher, no respect of person, no consideration; and I, who have held the chief seat in the town-hall of Ghent, as knight, master of the goldsmiths' company, and burgomaster, for more than twenty years, to be caged up in my old age between iron-barred windows, and double-locked doors, it is enough to drive me mad to think upon it. Such an alloy in the life of a man is a greater violation of all that is proper in the nature of things, than to put brass filings into the melting pot with pure gold. But how shall I make my first appearance before the citizens, Peter?

think of that; do think of some way, my good friend, that may be striking; some way becoming my state, and worthy the occasion of my return, which cannot fail to raise the spirits of this drooping city."

"I have thought upon it already," said Du Bois; "you must first go in *private* to my house, and then ——"

"And those rascally Matthews," continued Sir Simon, "Gilbert and all his brothers, they shall learn to know who they have dared to injure, and who I am, and what I am. But go on, Peter — my public appearance — my speech, let us think of that; how, which way, where had I best to make it? do think of the most striking method. I shall address them something in this way: — Most worthy fellow citizens — no, most worthy citizens, for my address will be to the multitude, and it is only the burgomasters who can exactly be called my *fellows*. — Most worthy citizens ——"

"Hush," said Peter du Bois, "the very warders will hear you on the walls of Ghent, and you must not lose the effect of your speech by

delivering it before the time. Now, Sir Simon, keep peace, and listen to me. You shall go to my house, I tell you, in private; wait there as close as may be, and I will come for you at the proper time, and produce you before all the assembled citizens in the market-place, where the shouts, with which they will receive you, shall make the old walls of the town ring again for joy. But now draw your hood close over your brows, and endeavour, if it is possible, to keep silence, for we are about to pass within the city gates; and the noble prisoner just returned from Ecclo must not be seen nor known till he appears like himself in due state before thousands to greet him."

In this manner, at a very early hour, was the simple Sir Simon de Bête conducted privately into Ghent. And having been duly deposited by Peter du Bois in his own house, that artful leader ushered him into the most private apartment; quitted it; turned the key in the lock; left a guard over the door, on the outside; and set off to join John Lyon and his bands, as Sir Simon was hallooing after him at the very top of his

breath, with many threats for his detention, and conjurements that he might be let out. And here, for the present, we must leave him to chew the cud of indignation, whilst we return to the White Hoods, and the events of this memorable day.

It was about nine o'clock in the morning, when Sir Roger d'Auterme, the high bailiff of Ghent, mounted upon a war horse, and bearing the emblazoned banner of the Earl, entered the city gates, attended by Gilbert Matthew, his brothers, and a band of men-at-arms. The bailiff bent his steps towards the corn-market, where a great body of the people was already assembled, and having taken his stand in the very centre of the square, holding erect the banner in his hand, he bid the clarions sound as the prelude of his proclamation.

Immediately two trumpeters advanced on either side the bailiff, each bearing upon his instrument an emblazoned ensign, with the lion sable langue d'or. Thrice they sounded a loud and lengthened peal; but no shouts, no acclamations from the populace, welcomed this announcement,

that the bailiff had come to execute some command of their lord; whilst the silence of the surrounding multitude appeared rather that of sullenness, than of obedience; and upon the faces of all present, an air of doubt, anxiety, and suspicion, was depicted in the strongest characters. A stern expectation of something terrible, but decisive, seemed to agitate the mind of every individual. The bailiff looked around him with astonishment; the countenance of the Matthews fell; whilst Gilbert passed his hand under his cloak, and fixed it firmly upon the hilt of his dagger.

Stephen Matthew now advanced to the side of Sir Roger d'Auterme, and said to him in a low voice, "I do not like the temper of the populace this morning; all men look but darkly upon us; had we not better return, and obtain a stronger force of men-at-arms, before we proceed in this business; the citizens have welcomed us coldly, and are not likely I think to be best pleased with our commission. Let us return to Andrighien."

"No," replied Roger d'Auterme, "I am

here to do my duty, and I will not flinch from it. Once more let the trumpets speak, and I will recite the proclamation."

Again the clarion spoke, but no sooner had it ceased, than a murmur arose amongst the body of the people, who, at the extremity of the market-place, were in motion, and seemingly giving way for others to advance. Roger d'Auterme observed the movement, but resolute in the performance of his duty, he extended his right arm, raised the banner of the Earl above his head, and exclaimed, in a voice of authority, " Citizens and men of Ghent, I am here to represent the person of your lord and ruler; my words recite his commands; attend, therefore, to the behests of the Earl of Flanders, and obey them. Lewis, your gracious prince, has generously acceded to all your desires; your fellow citizen is liberated."

" It is false, it is most false," murmured several voices amongst the crowd.

The bailiff commanded silence in that tone of firmness, which seldom fails to impress irresolute and vulgar minds. He was suffered to proceed.

" I repeat it," continued Roger d'Auterme,

" that your lord has graciously acceded to all your requisitions, that your franchises will be restored to you, and that he is the friend, as well as the ruler, of his citizens of his good town of Ghent. In requital of these his most gracious designs, he demands but as a mark of your love and your obedience, that you forthwith doff those accursed white hoods, they can bode no good to the state of Flanders, since they were assumed as an ensign of treason. And it is also the Earl's farther pleasure, that John Lyon and Peter du Bois, as the principal leaders and original instigators of this rebellion, be delivered up to justice. I, in the name of the Lord Lewis de Male, now proclaim them to be attainted traitors; and by the authority which this banner gives me, as the ensign of my office, I now proceed to arrest them. Follow me my masters," said the bailiff to his men-at-arms; " follow me, and do your duty."

Whilst Roger d'Auterme addressed these last words to the armed men whom he commanded, he prepared to advance; when suddenly a loud shout burst at once from the body of people

who stood near the extremity of the square; in another moment the clash of arms was heard, and the cries of "Ghent! Ghent! the White Hoods! the White Hoods!" rose from a thousand throats at once. The market-place became one scene of outrage, tumult, and confusion. Arms glittered, swords were brandished, and daggers drawn on all sides. Some shouted from alarm, others for riot. Many fled, and several fell down in the scuffle from their own violent efforts to secure a retreat; whilst John Lyon and Peter du Bois, taking advantage of the favourable moment, rushed forward at the head of four hundred of the White Hoods, dashed into the square, and made the walls of the town ring again with their reiterated shouts of "Ghent! Ghent! the White Hoods! the White Hoods! down with the banner! kill the Matthews! tear the bailiff off his horse!"

In the midst of this confusion (before John Lyon, with his followers, could reach the centre of the square), Gilbert Matthew, alarmed, and without the means of resistance, saw all was in combination against himself and his measures.

He determined, therefore, to leave the bailiff to his fate. And with a cold-blooded prudence worthy the heart of a coward, he made a sign to his brethren; and thus they managed, under cover of some of their men-at-arms, to secure a precipitate retreat. The rest of these men, seeing their example, and seized with the general panic, now fled in all directions, leaving the gallant Roger d'Auterme to brave the storm alone.

The bailiff, conscious of his danger, but disdaining flight or fear, and resolute in the discharge of his duty, stood firm in the midst of a cruel and incensed multitude, still holding erect the banner of Lewis de Male, and refusing to surrender it, though charged to do so by the mob on the peril of his life. He was now completely surrounded. Some held their swords or other weapons pointed at his breast, as if they would instantly dispatch him. But D'Auterme only looked indignantly upon them; still refusing to surrender up the banner of his office.

While the bailiff thus stood resolute but defenceless, with an aspect at once noble and

commanding, to which his magnanimity of spirit had given something of an expression that might be termed sublime, he seemed like the lordly lion, which, brought to bay by the hunters, surrounded by yelling dogs, and a thousand instruments of death aimed at him on every side, still rises fearfully upon his enemies, and, majestic even in his fall, yields his life, but with terror to his oppressors.

So looked the noble Roger d'Auterme, as he once more raised the banner and faced the incensed multitude, exclaiming, "Whilst I hold this ensign, I represent the person of your lord; I therefore command your obedience; lay down your arms, and mercy shall be shewn to you; and if you want an intercessor with the Earl, follow me unarmed. I will sue to Lewis for his repentant citizens, but not for avowed traitors. Come on then, I lead the way; follow me to the feet of your prince."

"To the prince of hell," said Du Bois, and rushing forward, assisted by some of the most desperate of the mob, who composed the bands of White Hoods, he tore Roger D'Auterme

from his horse, and murdered him without a word. The noble spirit of the bailiff had fled to the world of spirits; his bleeding body lay extended on the ground pierced with more than twenty wounds from the hands of the rebels, and the dagger of Du Bois still remained fixed in that wound which had penetrated his heart, in life the seat of all that was noble, and now in death the sheath of the assassin's weapon. Even the murderers and their associates seemed struck with horror by their own daring deed, and as if to drown in tumult the terrible feelings they had awakened, with hands reeking in the blood of an innocent man, and with looks wild and livid, they sent forth disorderly shouts, uttered falsehood and treason, endeavouring to arouse an equal degree of cruelty and madness in all who stood gazing, mute with horror, around them.

A fearful and unnatural shriek of exultation was at this moment heard from amidst the crowd, and in the next moment it was followed by a laugh, such a laugh as it might be supposed would speak the gratulation of a fiend on the act of murder. Ursula, her eyes flashing with

frensy and diabolical malice, immediately rushed forward, stooped over the mangled body of the bailiff, and tearing out the dagger that rested in the wound, she brandished it in one hand, as she seized the banner of the Earl in the other, threw it upon the ground, and trampled it under her feet. "Thus, thus," exclaimed the wretched sorceress, "thus perish the enemies of Ghent; thus shall fall Lewis, disgraced like the ensign of his accursed house. Thus dies every tyrant. The banner is fallen; the White Hoods are exalted; the banner lies beneath my foot; and my arm shall guide the White Hoods to victory. Now," she continued in her accustomed enthusiastic strain of pretended prophecy, "this dagger, which has been the first to let loose the blood of your enemies, this dagger shall be the example to thousands. Follow up the work; citizens of Ghent do yourselves right; let death, fire, battle, and victory avenge your wrongs, and confirm your freedom; it is I who command it; it is I who proclaim it; and for this wretched carcase," added Ursula, as she spurned the remains of the valiant Roger d'Au-

terme with her foot, "let the dogs gnaw the flesh, and the ravens tear each limb, they are not worthy to feast the glutton worm."

The fury of the populace had risen to the highest degree of frenzied excitement; and Ursula (who, though hated by all, was feared by all) appeared to their inflamed imaginations as acting at this moment under the immediate inspiration of her terrific powers. They hastened to obey her mandates; and confusion, outrage, and cruelty seemed at once let loose, as the multitude proceeded to treat with insult the body of the murdered bailiff. Ursula witnessed the effects of her own art. A ghastly smile stole over her dark and terrible features. She pointed to the torn banner with her finger, and retreated from the spot.

Scarcely had she done so, when a second tumult seemed to arise from the extremity of the market-place, and a party of young men, each wearing a white hood, with Philip Von Artaveld (alone bare-headed amongst them), rushed forward, sword in hand, towards the spot where the murder had been so recently committed. The

first object upon which Philip cast his eyes was John Lyon, who stood mute and motionless, as if overwhelmed with horror, and surprised by the pangs of remorse, for the very success of his own schemes. Peter du Bois was near him, and regarded the dreadful scene with a hardened and unchanged aspect of boldness and resolution.

Von Artaveld gazed for a moment on the lifeless corpse. "Gracious God!" he exclaimed, "what is this you have done? you have slain a brave man in the execution of his duty, and now you insult his remains!" With these words, Von Artaveld, supported by his band of archers, advanced towards the ruffians who had possessed themselves of the body, and were dragging it insultingly by the heels along the pavement of the market-place.

"Put down the corpse," said Philip, in a tone of authority; "I command here, and I swear by all that is sacred in Heaven, I will pass this sword through the breast of the first man who shall dare to disobey me."

The presence of the gallant Philip acted with

a paralysing effect upon the boldness of these hardy ruffians. The very name of Von Artaveld was indeed like a charm in Ghent; it could master the rudest passions; and Philip, beloved by the citizens in general, found it an easy matter to command the unruly, since he was certain of being supported in his measures by the body of the people.

There was a moment's pause, even a moment's silence, in this uproar of tumult and of crime. Philip threw his own mantle over the body of the bailiff, as the ruffians, who had dragged it along the ground, slunk back before him. Von Artaveld next dismissed some of his band to summon the attendance of the monks of the monastery of the Friars Minor, in Ghent, in order that the corpse might be removed to consecrated ground. He again demanded the cause and motives that had led to an outrage he so abhorred and lamented.

John Lyon acquainted him with the principal circumstances, and laid a great stress upon the infraction of the treaty by the Earl's demand of his own life, and that of Peter du Bois. Philip

listened with attention; but no sooner had he heard the last-mentioned circumstance, than his cheek flushed with sudden resentment, and his eye seemed to speak the anger and fire of his soul, as he laid his hand upon his sword; but, looking down upon the body, he only said, "We might have done ourselves justice, and yet have spared this cruel deed."

John Lyon saw his opportunity, and, wishing to gain an audience before Von Artaveld addressed the multitude, he raised his voice, and said to those about him, "Citizens, you have this day been summoned by the Earl of Flanders, not only to give up the lives of those who have endangered them in support of the public cause, but you are also commanded to throw off your white hoods, and to cast down your arms. Will you do this? Will you thus betray yourselves, when you already find the power of these white hoods to protect your liberties? They have served you better than could hoods of red or black, or any other colour that monks, or even cardinals, could raise for you. The white hood has struck terror into the hearts

of your enemies; for your own sakes, my fellow-citizens, I conjure you, do not cast it off; for the sake of all that is dear to you, for the love you bear to your children and to your country, resign it but with life; for no sooner will you have laid the white hood aside, and surrendered up your arms, than all your franchises will be lost for ever. For my own part, I have assumed mine for the maintenance of right, and never will I doff it whilst I have one drop of blood remaining to shed in your cause."

"We will not doff the white hood! down with the Earl of Flanders! down with all tyrants! we will follow John Lyon! we will die with him! let John Lyon be our leader! let him rule the city! we will follow him to death! Ghent and John Lyon! the White Hoods and Ghent!" These were shouts that every where arose from the surrounding multitude, as John Lyon concluded his address.

He once more essayed to speak, but, ere he could do so, Von Artaveld stepped before him, and commanded silence. It was some time before the acclamations of the people sufficiently

subsided for Von Artaveld to address the citizens. At length he said, " My friends, if I now conjure you to do nothing that is violent or rash, do not think that such a request on my part proceeds either from a fear of our enemies, or from a wish to desert your cause. The treaty into which we had entered has been broken by this demand of the lives of your leaders. And I fear it shews us, but too plainly, we must henceforth trust to nothing but our swords to obtain justice. Still Earl Lewis is our natural lord, he is in himself noble, and I am convinced that his present conduct must have arisen from the advice of the evil counsellors by whom he is surrounded. We all know Lewis for a brave prince, I will not therefore think him a treacherous one. Let us war then, not against our prince, but against his corrupt favourites; and henceforth never let us stain our honourable cause by an outrage like the act of this day—to murder a defenceless man. The first amongst you who shall dare again so to disgrace the name of Ghent shall have his white hood torn

from off his head, and my own hand shall do the part of justice upon him."

Low murmurs now arose, whilst some of the ruffians who had been concerned in the murder of the bailiff muttered imprecations against Gilbert Matthew and his brothers, and said the bailiff might have been spared, had he not brought such evil company with him.

"Was Gilbert Matthew and his brothers with Roger d'Auterme when he came to issue the proclamation?" inquired Von Artaveld.

"They were indeed," replied John Lyon; "and they fled, leaving the bailiff to suffer alone."

"Cowardly wretches!" exclaimed Von Artaveld. "And now, my fellow-citizens," he continued, again addressing the people, "make war upon evil counsellers, but do not touch the anointed head of your natural lord. I will once more seek Lewis de Male, and demand the removal of that crew of villains who beset him, who abuse the state, and tyrannise over us in his name. If entreaty fails, we must remove

them by the sword; but touch not the life or the office of your prince; and now lift up your voices, and cry with me, ‘ Long live the Earl of Flanders, long live our noble prince!’ ”

The multitude caught the expressions; and, moved by the generous feeling and conduct of Von Artaveld, with the accustomed fickle-mindedness of a mob, they now shouted, “ Long life to the Earl of Flanders!” in the same tumultuous manner in which they had just before exclaimed to put him down.

Von Artaveld, when silence was once more obtained, looked mournfully upon the body of the bailiff of Ghent. “ There my fellow citizens,” said he, “ there lie the mortal remains of one who was alike honest and brave; had all our lord’s dependents been like him, this wretched day had never chanced. You have slain a man who was truly worthy; mourn your deed, but do not mourn in vain. Confess your crime, and demand pardon both of God and of your prince for its commission. Generous minds will never, in cool blood, refuse to acknowledge the guilty acts committed in moments of passion;

shew your repentance by giving an honourable testimony to the bailiff of Ghent. He was too honest to die rich in his office; comfort his widow, and provide for his orphans; and may the Power from whom alone you can find mercy for this act — may He grant it to you, even as you shew pity to the widowed matron and her fatherless children. The monks of the Friars Minor advance to bear off the body. I will attend it to the church; and then let your chief burghers assemble in the town-hall of this city, where I will meet them to consult upon what measures it will be necessary to pursue."

A few brothers of the order of St. Francis, bare-footed, and clad in their black garments, now approached, with a terrified aspect, shocked at the violence so lately committed, and alarmed to find themselves called upon to remove the body of the murdered, under the very eyes of the murderers. Philip saw their dismay; his assurances of safety gave them some comfort; and headed by the brave Von Artaveld and his friends, they bore off the remains of the bailiff to their own church.

No sooner had they quitted the market-place, than John Lyon once more addressed the people. "Von Artaveld, my friends," said he, "acts with more generosity than prudence. He would ——"

"No, no; we will live and die with Von Artaveld!" shouted the multitude.

"And so will I live and die with Von Artaveld," continued John Lyon, in a loud voice. "You see how Von Artaveld deplores the murder of the bailiff. This murder, my friends, could never have happened, but for those accursed Matthews whom Roger d'Auterme brought with him. Their presence incensed the public mind, and the wrath they kindled fell upon the bailiff. It is Gilbert Matthew, my fellow citizens, who gives evil counsel to the Earl; it is by Gilbert Matthew's means that you are robbed of your franchises."

Here Du Bois stepped forward, and with that play of sarcastic expression upon his features, which seemed as if he looked with scorn and irony upon the very people he was about to address, with an assurance that might be termed

unparalleled (for his hands and his clothes still bore the "bloody witness" of the deed he had so recently committed), he stood erect, bold and unblushing, and thus spoke to the assembly: "Most worshipful fellow-citizens (the word worshipful, pronounced in a marked tone of irony), you see how that noble and wise youth, Philip Von Artaveld, laments the death of the bailiff who came hither to hang myself and another of your leaders, John Lyon. I would therefore propose to you to do an acceptable piece of service, that may pleasure Von Artaveld; and that whilst he joins the reverend monks in singing a mass for the bailiff's soul, we should employ ourselves in the revenge of his murder; and since it came to pass solely by the presence of Gilbert Matthew and his brothers, I propose that we lose no time in seizing upon their persons; then let us repossess ourselves of the wealth these Matthews have stolen from the public coffers, and burn and raze their houses to the ground; and now, my friends," continued the impudent Du Bois, "who follows me to revenge the bailiff's death?"

The proposal was received with unanimous approbation, for every one hated the Matthews. "All! all!" exclaimed the mob, "we will all follow Du Bois! down with the Matthews! burn their houses! hang Gilbert! revenge the bailiff! lead on Du Bois! we will live and die with Du Bois!"

Thus shouted the fickle multitude, as they followed the steps of Peter du Bois and John Lyon, who led them on like so many fierce and yelling hounds, let loose for the chace, and wildly scouring along the plain to hunt up the game for the amusement and the profit of their masters.

All now was one scene of tumult, bloodshed, and outrage. The Matthews were every where sought for in the city; but they had long since fled beyond the walls of Ghent. The White Hoods, therefore, were forced to content themselves with the plunder of their houses, which, after the pillage, they reduced by fire to the ground.

The whole city was now in the utmost disorder. The idle, the vicious, the wicked, of all

kinds and descriptions, had hastened to assist in pillaging and burning the houses of the Matthews; and many this day assumed the terrible distinction of the White Hood, publicly wearing it, under pretext of supporting the cause of liberty, but really with a view to prosper that of lawless depredation.

Many of the sober and elder class of the citizens retired within their houses, and shut them up; and now did they begin to murmur and to say, that Ghent would pay dearly for the quarrels of Gilbert Matthew and John Lyon, since their private feuds had first led the way to insurrection.

After this dreadful day, John Lyon and Peter du Bois returned together in the dusk of the evening to take some rest and refreshment at the house of the former. As they passed through the market-place, in their way, (that very place where they had acted so deep a tragedy in the morning,) they heard the shriek of a woman, who seemed to be surrounded by several armed men, employed in dragging her by force along with them. This circumstance was scarcely noticed

by John Lyon, for so great had been the outrages of that day's work, that many a woman in Ghent had screamed for mercy in vain. Du Bois observed the struggle, but dead to every feeling of humanity, it only excited a sarcastic smile as he said to John Lyon, "That woman calls loud enough in the public streets to raise half the town; but she will keep peace soon if our White Hoods have to deal with her."

The uncle and the nephew passed on, conversing upon the subject of their successful riots; but what was the surprise of both the guilty insurgents, when, upon reaching the house of John Lyon, they found old Catharine bound hand and foot, almost dead with apprehension, and only able to tell them, that her young mistress, the unhappy Anna, had just before been forcibly carried off.

"It was the cries of my child, then," said the agonized father, "that I heard in the market-place."

John Lyon sunk into a chair. The retributive justice of Heaven seemed, even at this moment, to visit him, for *he* felt a pang as great

at hearing of the loss of his child, as the widow of the unfortunate bailiff experienced when she learnt the intelligence of the murder of her husband.

CHAP. III.

We must now once more conduct the reader to the palace of Andrighien, where (upon the day after the murder of the bailiff,) within a magnificent apartment, the unhappy Anna sate in melancholy contemplation of her fate. She had been forcibly dragged from her own home, and hurried to Andrighien by a body of the Earl's men-at-arms, during the general confusion; whilst the populace were engaged so intently upon burning the houses of the Matthews, that Lewis had effected his cruel purpose, without danger of interruption from either John Lyon or his bands of White Hoods. Anna was now effectually within his power; and so well planned and sudden had been her removal, that she actually did not suspect it could have been by the Earl's order till she found herself within the walls of Andrighien.

As Anna looked out through the windows of

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the palace, which were barred (agreeably to the custom of so securing all lower apartments throughout the houses in Flanders), she envied the very birds, whilst, eager on the wing, they sported through the air in the full enjoyment of liberty. Anna was thus musing on her fate when she heard the key of the chamber turn in the lock; the door opened, and a man entered, closely muffled, the face and figure being entirely concealed by the hood and mantle.

He turned towards her as he advanced, and casting aside the hood, Anna instantly recognised the Earl of Flanders. There was a fierceness, a something undefined but terrible in his aspect, that made her heart sink within her, as she gazed upon him. Hitherto he had always met her with a gay and smiling countenance; a change, therefore, so evident, in conjunction with the violent act which had placed her at Andrighien, boded the worst evils her fancy could suggest.

At length the Earl spoke: "Anna," said he, "you who have so long been the object of my affection, at whose suit I granted life to a traitor, who would now repay my mercy by the ruin of

my country, you cannot be surprised that I have made you my prisoner, or that I should expect, at your hands, some atonement for the unparalleled injuries I have received from your father."

"My lord," replied the trembling girl, "I am within your power; I will not, therefore, use vain reproaches; I have nothing to hope but from your pity, I will add, your justice; since you must be sensible that, however I may deplore the conduct of my misguided father, I am in no manner answerable for its consequences."

"But you are, you shall be," said Lewis sternly. "Hear me, Anna; I loved you with a tenderness that made me forget myself, my power. I wished to win you only by your affection. For your sake I have long been at enmity with the Countess of Artois. I have neglected my affairs, hated the rank that separated you from being the sharer of its greatness. To your father, at your solicitation, I granted life. To pleasure you I have hitherto forborne to urge even my own suit: and how am I repaid? Your father would become my destroyer; you would leave me to misery and death."

"No, my lord," said Anna, "I am not so ungrateful; I well remember that to you I owe my father's life; my gratitude can never cease. You promised at least to shew me forbearance, to ——"

"But know," continued the Earl, "my resolution is fixed, though I am changed in feeling even as others change. Can I think on the past, and not instantly assert my right to vengeance? But yesterday, your father, ingrate, traitor, murderer as he is, *your* father stabbed my bailiff, trampled my banner under foot, defied my authority, stirred up the citizens to rebellion, sacked, burnt, and destroyed the property of my officers before my sight; *your* father did this, and do *you* expect mercy at my hands? I learnt the dreadful tale of murder, the murder of the noble Roger d'Auterme. I witnessed the fire from these very windows. Then, Anna, then I issued my orders to secure you at least as my prisoner; and as I beheld the flames rise high above the walls of my good city, and cast their red glow of light upon the waters

of the Scheld, then, even then, I vowed a full, complete, and dreadful vengeance."

"Oh, my lord," exclaimed Anna, as she threw herself upon her knees before the impassioned prince, "let it not fall on me!"

Lewis, scarcely heeding her supplication, proceeded; his words poured in wrath from his lips, with the quickness and tumult of an angry torrent. "Yes," he said, "I vowed a dreadful vengeance, that fire, the sword, dishonour, and death should fall upon the heads of those accursed traitors and all their race. My vow is registered in hell, where fiends, who assist the purposes of vengeance, shall rise to aid it, ere I will resign the hope to satiate my very soul with the misery of you all. Talk not then to me, woman," he continued, as Anna endeavoured once more to supplicate for pity; "my sacrifice of you, of your honour, of your peace, is but an act of justice, of just and solemn retribution."

Thus spoke Lewis de Male, governed by the violence of one of those fits of extreme passion to which he was so subject, and now rendered more violent by the idea he had encouraged of

a dreadful retributive justice. Of all baits that the evil one holds out to seduce mankind, there is none more specious or more dangerous than that which stirs on the mind to commit a wicked deed (to which it is inclined), by lending it the appearance of a just retribution of injuries, whether real or supposed. It was thus Lewis now beheld his act of cruelty to the unhappy girl within his power: thus seen, in the exaggerated view of passion, it flattered his vices without alarming his pride. Hitherto the innocence, the dignity of Anna's virtue, had in some measure awed the Earl whilst in her presence; the voice of conscience, too, had spoken in her behalf; so that he had compromised between passion and conscience, by resolving to obtain her, if possible, by her own consent, by seducing her affections, a means that would make her his own, without doing violence to those feelings of compunction, which he would not encourage, and yet could not wholly suppress. Thus had Lewis, by the aid of sophistry, rendered useless to his own mind the great principle of moral conduct, which teaches that ill should not be done to

another under any pretext or colouring of our own. The open rebellion of John Lyon had awakened his worst feelings; they rose with the occasion, till all forbearance on the part of the Earl was at an end; and the low whispers of conscience, that had hitherto pleaded for Anna, were drowned in the hurricane of passion.

The unhappy girl, overwhelmed by the vehemence of his manner, still bent on her knees before him, clasped her hands, and looked up in his face in a manner so gentle, so imploring, that it might have awakened pity in the sternest breast. Lewis was scarcely proof against her entreaty, and turned from her as if he feared being melted to a better purpose; and in order to keep up the feeling of his resentment, he again dwelt upon her father's crimes, and his own denunciations of vengeance.

"My lord," said Anna, "my father's guilt is not mine. I do not ask you to spare me for his sake, but for your own. Think, oh think, how bitter will be the remorse you must one day feel, when time, that subdues the wild rule of passion, shall make you remember the poor girl your

cruelty brought to ruin and to death. In pity to yourself, spare me, oh spare me!"

"Why should I spare you?" said the Earl; and, as if endeavouring to fortify his mind by a specious mode of reasoning, he added, "And I do spare you, when I save you from sharing in the guilt and the punishment of traitors; when I save you from herding with the lowest and the basest of mankind, — men who, under the name of your father's party, would lead you through scenes of civil discord, and at last leave you exposed to all the horrors of misery and want."

"And let them come," replied Anna; "I could bear misery and want in patience. Welcome, most welcome, would be the lowest state on earth, so I might meet it with innocence."

"Innocence!" exclaimed Lewis, scornfully. "To herd with traitors, is that innocence?"

"I am no traitor, my lord," replied Anna; "I am your vassal, true and loyal to you."

"Then prove it," said Lewis, "by obedience; on the instant prove it. This palace is no longer a place of safety either for thee or me; it lies too near to Ghent. All is prepared for our

departure; and I come to ask, nay, to command you to follow me whither I shall conduct you. Follow me in silence, and with submission; all resistance will be vain, since I have the power to compel obedience, should you refuse it. Still I would rather that you yielded in peace to a fate you have no means to resist. Come, Anna," continued Lewis, as he threw his arms around her; "come but with a free heart, and I can banish every unkind feeling; all shall be love and harmony between us."

At these words, Lewis would have pressed her to his bosom, but Anna started from his embrace; stood aloof; whilst the flush of anger overspread her neck and mantled in her cheek; and, looking upon the Earl with an aspect that implied command rather than supplication, she uttered the word "*Forbear!*" in a tone of voice that awed even the licence of Lewis de Male. The general temper of Anna's mind was so gentle, so passive, that few persons would have believed her capable of so much energy. Wholly indifferent to things of trifling import, her feelings, concentrated and strenuous when called

forth into action, assumed a character of the utmost energy and resolution. Weak minds sink under misfortunes; it is the property of strong ones to brave them; they may be shaken, but not overpowered. So was it with Anna; she might, indeed, be compared to a noble vessel, that glides calmly down the current of an unruffled tide, but which, when the billows rage around, rises with the swell of the stormy waters, and rides majestically above them, as they roar and fret, and break against her bulk in vain.

Anna now felt her danger; but conscious rectitude made her bold; her character seemed changed from timid softness to that of perfect courage; she turned to Lewis, and said in a firm tone, "My lord, I now appeal to *you*, not fearing your power, but *demanding* its exertion; even against *yourself* — against your own bad purpose. I am your subject, and to *you* I appeal for liberty. My detention is unlawful; you can have no pretext to accuse me of guilt. Not to Lewis de Male do I address my prayer, but to the *Earl of Flanders!* he is bound by his

oath of office to redress the meanest vassal of his dominions. Give me, therefore, liberty; and in doing so, you will achieve a greater conquest than when your arms triumphed over thousands of armed foes; for you will be the victor of yourself, of your own passions; a conquest that will add more glory to the brow of a prince, than the coronet with which it is encircled."

Anna, while she pronounced this address, exalted by the energy of her feelings, stood before the Earl with a composure of countenance and a dignity of mien that astonished him, and would have excited his admiration, even had she been the plainest of her sex. But so young, so beautiful, and fearless, Lewis gazed upon her as he would upon a creature of a higher world, and, bursting forth into impassioned exclamations of love and praise, he sought by every means to win her; to dazzle her understanding, to raise her pity, and to melt her soul into tenderness and sympathy.

"Oh Anna," he said, "do not—do not bid me tear you from my heart; let me but hope, and live the sole mistress of my affections, the

guide of my actions, as you are alone the object of my thoughts. I will do all you wish — any thing but part from you — that I can never do and live."

"We must part, my lord," replied Anna, coldly; "the high-born prince and the lowly vassal can form no union but that of protection, reverence, and duty."

"Nay," said the Earl, "but you have a mind, a soul, a person that would confer lustre on a crown, rather than receive any from it. Anna, share my power, my wealth, my love; all things that I possess shall be laid at your feet. You shall inhabit my palaces; the treasures of foreign climates shall be open to you; whilst unbounded wealth shall give you the means to satisfy your every wish."

"They could never," answered Anna, "purchase for me one such happy hour as the peasant girl passes in her guileless toil. Wealth can never hide the blush of shame, though her mantle be of glittering gold."

"But power," said the Earl, "has power no charms to captivate a youthful beauty? Think

how god-like it is to sit as the dispenser of good to thy friends, and to crush thy foes beneath thy foot."

"God is alone the dispenser of good or evil," replied Anna; "and no act can be virtuous in his sight, unless it comes to pass by virtuous means. The characters of infamy are like the trappings of death; they hang out the signal of pride to the eye, whilst horror and corruption lie beneath them. I want not wealth nor power on such terms as you would give them!"

"But love," continued Lewis, "true, faithful, unbounded love,—has that no charms? Love that would watch over you with the tenderness of unceasing care, and, like a mother who clasps her nursling to her bosom, would chide the very air, and fan it back should it come near thee with too rude a breath; love that would cherish, honour ——"

"And would destroy me, soul and body both," said Anna, with the greatest emotion. "Hence, tempter, hence, and learn that I scorn such love as you would offer me. Nay, call it not love, for when would a true affection seek to disho-

nour, to render wretched the object of its cares? No, my lord, your love seeks only a selfish aim, and no happiness of mine. Why urge me thus? It is vain and fruitless. I implore, I conjure, nay I command you, in the name of *Him* whom princes must obey, to give me liberty. I am the injured person, not you, my lord; restore me to that freedom of which you have so unjustly deprived me, and I will grant my forgiveness for the injury."

"Forgiveness!" exclaimed the Earl, who, finding all the seductive arts he had attempted failed in their effect, now once more gave way to a torrent of passion; "Forgiveness, and from thee! Have I not honoured thee; have I not tried to raise thee, grovelling as thou art, and leagued with traitors? But a prince is scorned, and by whom? Gracious Heaven! who are we? am I not thy prince, and thou but a simple burgher's daughter?"

"Aye," said Anna, with composure, "and the burgher's daughter is greater than a prince, when she can teach him what he has forgot — his duty."

" This insolence is beyond all bearing," exclaimed the Earl; " but I will teach that proud soul humility. I will humble thee, indeed, and thou shalt hereafter sue, beg, crawl at my feet, and ask *my* mercy, *my* forgiveness. Thou shalt do this; thou who hast dared thus to address thy lord."

With these words Lewis seized Anna violently by the arm, and attempted to drag her towards the chamber-door. " You go," added he, " to a place where all complaint will be vain, and where I will never part from you till it is my will to shew forgiveness."

" Oh! my lord," said Anna, as she threw herself at his feet, and clung to his knees for support, " if I have spoken wrong pardon me, but do not resent it thus; I will humble myself to the dust before you. I will welcome a prison, or the scourge; I will do any thing, however mean or grievous, so you but suffer me to live guiltless; for oh! I could not, indeed I could not, suffer life in shame."

" It is too late for supplication," replied Lewis;

" all prayer is vain; force shall take you hence, shall take you to be mine."

" Oh ! do not say so," cried Anna vehemently; " tear me to pieces; lay me dead at your foot; drag me with wild horses from your palace gates; but do not carry me to dishonour. Oh ! do not, do not, lest curses fall upon your head."

" All is vain," said the Earl, and throwing his arms around the affrighted Anna, he forced her towards the door of the chamber. " You are mine," continued Lewis, " I swear it by ——"

" Hark !" said Anna, as she looked wildly round the room; " what cry was that ?"

" That— what cry ?" exclaimed Lewis.

" Hark; again it comes," said Anna; " those are the sounds of tumult."

A trumpet was now heard from without, which was followed by a violent crash, and the exclamations of " Ghent ! Ghent ! the White Hoods ! the White Hoods !" burst at once as from a thousand throats. Anna clasped her hands together, looked up to Heaven, and exclaimed, " Thank God ! thank God !"

The door of the chamber was, in an instant, burst open, and a confidential attendant of the Earl, who had been the chief agent of his schemes upon Anna, rushed into the room, his sword drawn, his countenance pale as death. "Save yourself, my lord," said he, "save yourself; the White Hoods have surprised us; they have suddenly surrounded the palace. They come in such a force that all resistance will be madness. The damsel here is safe, for her father leads them on; but save yourself, you will not be spared. Escape by the postern that leads through the walls into the wood beyond the garden; you may escape that way whilst the rebels seek you in the palace. Lose not a moment, or you are a dead man."

Lewis de Male saw the danger, and, cursing his fate, he rushed out of the apartment, hastily followed by the attendant; and scarcely had he effected his escape by the postern door at the extremity of the gardens, when the White Hoods (who had demolished the palace gates) poured into the royal habitation with so much violence and fury, that they might be compared to a suc-

cession of angry waves that run roaring, and striving the one to overleap the other.

In every apartment did the White Hoods seek the Earl; their purpose was to seize upon his person, and to detain him till they should have taken a bloody revenge upon his counsellors, and several of his knights and nobles; and then to appoint new officers, and to make their own terms before they gave him freedom.

In this object they were disappointed; but Andrighien afforded too rich a temptation to be left in peace. Here the Earl kept his wardrobe, his plate, and jewels. These were plundered. Even the font, in which he had been baptized, and which he had caused to be removed to this his favourite palace, was destroyed, together with the beautiful cradle of chased silver in which he had been nursed. Every thing, of any value, that could be removed, was plundered by the White Hoods, who, before they left the spot, set fire to this noble structure (one of the richest Gothic buildings of the time), and reduced it into a heap of ashes.

Anna was found, almost in a state of insensi-

bility, lying upon the floor of the apartment where she had parted from the Earl; and in this condition she was carried back to Ghent by her father and Du Bois.

CHAP. IV.

Immediately after the murder of the bailiff, the Countess of Artois, and the principal ladies and nobles of the court, became so alarmed at their proximity to Ghent, that they removed from Andrighien, with all possible secrecy and dispatch, to the Earl's palace at Male, where Lewis was born, and from which he took his name. Male, although not very far distant from Andrighien, was deemed more secure, on account of its being strongly fortified, so that it was at once a palace and a feudal castle, a combination of magnificence and safety common to the period. Here also the Matthews had fled for safety, after their cowardly desertion of Roger d'Auterme; and it is probable the Earl Lewis would not have lingered, as he did, at Andrighien, but for some fears, lest his designs upon Anna should fail, had he caused her to be brought at once to Male, now inhabited by

her jealous enemy, his mother. At Male, also, the officers and chief nobles of Flanders had been summoned to attend, in order to debate upon what measures should be instantly adopted to quell the rebellious faction of the White Hoods.

It is to Male, therefore, we must now conduct the reader, where, within an apartment of gloomy grandeur in this ancient castle, Margaret, Countess of Artois, was seated beneath a canopy of state, employed in looking over several letters and papers, that lay upon a table before her, with much apparent interest.

The Countess, who is already known to the reader as the mother of the Earl, might be termed, in some sort, the Queen Elizabeth of her day, saving that she was not the mistress of a kingdom like England. Her own territory of Artois, however considerable as a county or province, was yet insufficient for the exercise of her ambition, her authority, or the active and masculine character of her mind; so that, from retaining, as she did, an extraordinary influence over her less politic son, Flanders became the

scene of her ambition and of her power. Like Elizabeth, she was passionate in temper, jealous of her authority, and possessed uncommon strength of character; but she had not, like our celebrated princess, a generous feeling, a virtuous pride, in the welfare of her people. The views of the Countess originated from, and ended in, mere self-interest, and her pride sought the aggrandisement of her family by any means, however oppressive, and by those of expediency rather than of justice. Although she had been beautiful in her youth, and still retained a noble person, her vanity (of which she possessed a sufficient share) was more fixed on the higher distinction of intellect than of beauty or fascination. She was at once firm, but haughty, cold in heart, yet passionate in temper, vindictive, but deeply cunning.

Whilst the Countess was engaged in examining the papers placed before her, an attendant entered the chamber, and informed her, Gilbert Matthew, the deacon of the pilots, desired to speak with her. He was instantly admitted. Gilbert approached the Countess with a look

of the most profound submission and respect; for, insolent as he was to his inferiors, and even to his equals, he could curb the natural propensities of his disposition in a presence where it became his interest to use respectful observance; so that it was commonly said of Gilbert, that he had, in his own character and person, the nature of two animals very different from each other, and by turns displayed the temper of each, being a wolf in the city, but a sheep at the court.

The Countess replied to the profound reverence of Gilbert with a slight inclination of the head, but she neither changed her attitude, nor addressed to him the least salutation of courtesy; for Margaret was one of those persons who, when engaged in affairs of moment, never lose sight of their object, nor expend even a word upon any matter that may be irrelevant. "You have business with me, master deacon," said the Countess, "be pleased to state it."

"Most noble lady," replied Gilbert, "I have presumed to seek this interview, as I am in duty bound, to lay before your judgment, and for the exercise of your wisdom, things of moment to

my lord the Earl, whose rule, when assisted by the councils of a wise and beauteous lady like yourself——"

"To the point, sir," said the Countess, interrupting him, "to the point. Leave these fair terms; they may be excused, since we do not expect in the deacon of our pilots the holiday words of a courtier — and you are too low-born, Master Gilbert Matthew, to pay compliments that can be valued by me. To the point, therefore."

"Madam," replied Gilbert, somewhat disconcerted by the cold and haughty manner in which his flattery had been received, "the council are in attendance to give audience to Philip Von Artaveld and the twelve citizens of Ghent, who come to beg my lord's mercy for the murder of the bailiff, and to sue for terms; but the Earl is not yet arrived at Male; and the council crave your direction, if they are to assemble in your presence to-day, or to bid the citizens hence, and to return on the morrow to seek an audience."

"They must have an audience to-day," said

the Countess; "and I will take the place of my son in the chamber. But where can Lewis tarry? Thus is it ever. His affairs are neglected, and would go to ruin but for me. To be absent at such a moment is death to our cause, especially when these White Hoods dare us in every point."

"Madam," answered Gilbert, "have no fears about the White Hoods; for whenever my lord pleases to exert his full power against them, not a man amongst them shall have a head left to wear his hood upon."

"I shall direct the proper means that must be adopted to crush them," said the Countess, "so soon as we have given audience to the citizens. But this Earl, this prince, who is my son in blood but not in spirit, where can he linger?"

Gilbert smiled, and, with an affectation of mystery and intelligence, as if he knew more than he wished to tell, looked down, and said nothing.

"Ha!" exclaimed the Countess, as she fixed her eye upon him, "thou dost know something,

thou hast intelligence of something hid from me; speak it, and this moment," continued Margaret, as she struck her hand vehemently upon the table, "speak it, or, by the coronet I wear, I will tear the badge of thy office, that anchor, from thy neck, and make my foot — varlet, a deacon instead of thee."

"Madam," replied Gilbert, "I fear to offend you should I speak the truth; and yet, if I suppress it, you have so keen a sense, so sudden a penetration, that even one glance of those bright eyes would detect me."

"Have done with this, once more I charge you, have done with it," said the Countess: "the eyes of Margaret of Artois are only to be looked upon by such as you when they would strike terror. Flatter your equals, master deacon, but do not dare to use such familiarity with me."

Gilbert was again abashed: he had twice offended the Countess by those smooth speeches, which would, in all probability, have charmed the ear of almost any other princess of his time; and he had really committed the offence unin-

tentionally. The fact was, Gilbert was used to flatter at the court, where a silver tongue had procured for him much advantage; so that he could scarcely speak, within the precincts of Andrighien or Male, without a compliment, that came as naturally from him as false words from a false heart.

The Countess again commanded him to declare what he knew, or suspected, might be the cause of the Earl's absence from Male, at a time when herself, and all the court and household, were already there assembled. This command was precisely what Gilbert desired. He assumed therefore a manner, the result of exquisite cunning, intended to express perfect obedience to her orders, yet at the same time a reluctance to speak openly on the subject. Gilbert bowed, sighed gently, and, slightly raising and letting fall his hands, he said, "Alas! madam, it is too evident, that, saving one great person, even the high-born princes of the land have their weaknesses and their errors."

"So," replied the Countess, in a tone of con-

tempt, " you would tell me that princes are still men; I can dispense with such information as needless, master deacon. Tell your tale; I can comment upon it without the aid of your philosophy."

" It is known to you, lady," continued Gilbert Matthew, " that John Lyon hath a fair daughter, who he contrived to throw in the way of your noble son."

" Ha! what of her?" exclaimed the Countess, and the flush of anger and alarm overspread her cheek; but, instantly checking herself, she added, " Do not tell me what I know already, but what I am to learn. I have not forgotten that, but for my interference, the Earl of Flanders would have disgraced his noble birth, aye, and have lost his earldom too, by marrying a woman too low to hold the state even of a waiting damsel at our court. Now tell your news, and briefly."

" This maiden was withdrawn then," said Gilbert, " but not, I fear, from the Earl."

" How!" exclaimed the Countess, " has John Lyon dared still to hold out the bait to my in-

fatuated son? Has Anna presumed — but it cannot be, I will not believe that she would dare to brave my resentment."

"The father has dared to do all that treason and outrage could accomplish," answered Gilbert; "and his daughter, by arts and seeming innocence, still holds the Earl a slave in her toils, but keeps his passion at bay, in the hope to ruin him, by persuading Lewis one day to make her his wife. This artifice must be *her own* work, since John Lyon can expect nothing now that he is become a traitor, unless it be, indeed, that should his White Hoods fail of success, he may at least secure his own neck by the influence of his child, as the mistress of his offended prince."

Whilst Gilbert made this artful speech, the Countess sat motionless, her brow darkened, and, rising suddenly from her seat, she exclaimed, "It is enough; if there are means within the compass of heaven or of earth, I will find them, to ruin the designs of this artful woman. But first, Gilbert, give me some proof your tale is true; for, if I mistake not, *you* were

a discarded suitor of this Anna, and you are not without malice, or villainy either, when it can prove useful to yourself. I will do nothing wantonly: if a sacrifice must be made, it shall be for a great cause of necessity. But what proof, I ask again, have you to adduce of the truth of these assertions?"

"That of my own eyes, most gracious lady," said Gilbert. "The woman who, under a pretext of asking alms of the Earl at the church of St. Bavon, and who was there interrupted in her attempt, that woman was Anna; she attempted to slip a letter into the hands of your son. I saw her when she retreated so suddenly, fearing detection: her veil was torn from her face for a moment in the crowd; I knew her instantly. That same day she had a private interview with my lord at Andrighien, in the pleasure-house of his garden. I returned from the city sooner than was expected. Observing the warder endeavoured to hinder my going towards the pleasure-house, it excited my suspicion; I therefore concealed myself behind the laurel walk, and determined to watch. Soon after, the Earl

of Flanders entered the garden, he then wore a remarkable chain of gold about his neck; but this was no longer to be seen when he quitted the garden; and Anna, in a short time, stole out of the pleasure-house, wearing upon her bosom that very chain, which doubtless the Earl Lewis had bestowed upon her as a mark of his affection; and I now fear, your noble son still lingers at Andrighien for her sake, as I learnt from one of his own people, that a woman had been brought there with all secrecy, upon the very day of the bailiff's murder; and that this woman was carefully concealed by the especial command of my lord."

"It is enough," said the Countess; "these are proofs more than enough; and I know that to me you would not dare to utter falsehood, for one falsehood detected would be your ruin. I will devise the means how to deal in this affair. Then shall you know from me how I will employ you; but in the mean time do not breathe a syllable of what you have stated to me to any living creature. We must seem to be ignorant of it, even to the Earl, for the present. I will read

a dreadful lesson to all damsels who shall dare to think they may, by the arts of cunning and a fair face, mate themselves with princes. Observe the greatest caution."

"Madam," replied Gilbert Matthew, "you may trust me; you need not fear being betrayed by the confidant of your councils and your measures."

"Change that term, Master Gilbert," said the Countess haughtily, "you are my instrument, but not the confidant of Margaret of Artois. I have bought you for my use; you have my confidence as far as it is necessary, but not a step beyond it. I repeat it, I have bought you for my service, as I would any other thing; you are wholly in my power; I have made you what you are by purchase, not from regard."

"You have indeed made me rich, and even great, beyond my utmost hopes," replied Gilbert Matthew, "and to you alone do I look to keep the favour of my lord. You need not, lady, therefore, fear me."

"I fear you not, man; I care not for you," said the Countess; "a word of mine would crush

you; your safety lies in silence and obedience; for though I grant you are useful to me, yet I hold you but as I would the pen that I now have in my hand, it writes the characters I dictate, as the tool of my own will."

"And I obey in like manner in all things," answered the servile deacon. "I have news of the utmost consequence now to communicate, and to you alone, noble lady. Having, to pleasure you, sent a private messenger to Paris, he is but this day returned."

"What is his intelligence?" eagerly enquired Margaret; "does Charles the Fifth still hold the Earl of Flanders in his displeasure, on account of the shelter he afforded to the Duke of Britanny, whilst he was a disgraced fugitive from France? Had I been in Ghent at the time, my son should never have sheltered the Duke to displease the French king."

"The King is still incensed against the Earl," answered Gilbert, "on account of his affording shelter to the Duke. But his grace's displeasure is now of little consequence, since he is in a dying state, and ere long his youthful son must

succeed to the throne, as Charles the Sixth of France."

"Why this is news indeed," exclaimed the Countess; "and you have done me a worthy service; I will requite it nobly. Such news, gained thus early, before the old king has breathed his last breath, may be made replete with advantage to us. No time must be lost; we will look upon this rising sun, and spread our fruits to ripen in its beams. France shall again become our ally; we shall need her aid. Our measures must be speedy and decisive — let me think a moment — Oliver de Clisson is now Constable of France."

"He is," replied Gilbert; "and in the world's report, he stands a most valiant soldier and wise counsellor."

"It is well, it is most fortunate," continued the Countess; "hear me, Gilbert, you shall assist in this; I now constitute you my private secretary, and your first duty shall be to write letters, that I will dictate, to the Constable; for it is most likely that he will guide the boy king his own way."

" It is so said in Paris, gracious lady," replied Gilbert; " it is also whispered, that the Constable has already more influence with the youthful Charles than either of his uncles, the Dukes of Berry or of Burgundy. Those princes have therefore anxiously sought the friendship and the favour of De Clisson, since the old king's health has become so shaken."

" And they shall seek mine too," said the Countess; " though Burgundy has already done that, for he owes to me his marriage with my grand-child, the heir of Flanders. But I know all their tempers, even to their lightest foible. Write to the Constable my greeting and good-will; take no note that I have heard of the King's danger; let all seem in pure regard; and tell him that the castle he so much wished to purchase from me in Artois, shall be his, free of all charge, during his own life; that I could not before give him this mark of my friendship, as I had not, till now, settled the affairs of my county, since the death of my husband. I know Sir Oliver— he will swallow the bait in all simplicity. He is a frank soldier, but has no more

policy in his temper than the baby king he will hereafter rule. And De Clisson thinks women have little wit — that they can do little, because they cannot handle a lance. Let him think so still — he will the less suspect my measures."

"I will write these letters forthwith, as you dictate, lady," answered Gilbert.

"Do so," continued the Countess; "Sir Oliver de Clisson will govern the young king of France. I will secure Sir Oliver for my interests, and then the Constable shall act as I would have him. So that France shall league with us, in despite of all her ancient jealousies. Will not that be politic?"

"Most certainly the measure cannot fail," replied Gilbert. "But would it not be as well, at this time, to say something to the royal uncles, gracious lady?"

"Why yes, I mean to do it," said Margaret of Artois. "They are both jealous of the Constable; they hate him, though they now court his friendship. It is only to enlarge their influence with the young king elect, and by the means of Sir Oliver, that they do so. Write to

them both, but cautiously; insinuate, but say nothing in direct terms. Hint obscurely, that it is the wish of Flanders, of myself in particular, that such able statesmen should be in their proper sphere; so that, whenever it shall please Heaven to remove the present king, I could desire to see them the rulers of the minority of the young prince. Hint, also, that there are some persons who could use their influence with Sir Oliver, so that he should be brought to desire the same, and to forward the plan. That at present prudence obliges me to notice these things but darkly; yet the time may come when I could serve them both in the point most essential to their interest. You may add in these letters a word in praise of De Berry's young wife; compliment Burgundy on his skill in breaking an adversary's lance; and you have them both, heart and hand."

"I will indite letters to such effect this very evening," said Gilbert, "so that by to-morrow they shall be ready for you to add your signet."

"It is well," answered the Countess. "I must now to the council-chamber, where I

purpose to address the assembly. I shall deeply lament the absence of my son, and yet shew that we must not await his return for consultation. But do you remember, Gilbert, (should Lewis de Male return before I would have him,) to instruct your brother Stephen, if possible, to use some device to stay him from the council, at least till I have answered the citizens. Lewis has more of warmth of temper than of policy. He is the slave of his passions, very weak, and, like all weak persons, does himself much mischief. And I tell you this of him, master deacon, not to shew you any confidence for your own sake, but that you may, by knowing the real character of your princely master, become the better judge how to manage him to fulfil my purposes."

Gilbert bowed, and the Countess continued: "Here, master deacon, are letters I have written in my own hand to the Duchess of Brabant; see them forthwith dispatched by a sure messenger. Carry the rest of these papers into my own chamber, and then follow me to the council. But stop, first accept this ring;

it is a precious diamond. Take it as your present fee for your intelligence: the varlet who serves me shall never lack his wages."

The Countess arose and quitted the chamber. Gilbert Matthew for a short time stood looking alternately after her and upon the ring she had given to him; and no sooner was she gone than he burst out into something of the following soliloquy, half muttered, and half spoken in an under tone of voice. "'The varlet who serves me shall never lack his wages!' Proud, insolent woman! But those wages are not yet paid, my lady countess; but they shall be," continued Gilbert, as he violently pulled on his glove, "and that with interest too. I will have a payment you little dream of, haughty Margaret. No confidant, forsooth! but an instrument—a tool—like the pen in her hand! Aye, and that shall write thee down, with all thy wisdom, a very woman, simple with all thy arts, and Gilbert Matthew thy master! Yes, I will write to De Clisson, aye, and to Burgundy and De Berry, but they shall all know *who* to thank for my lady's letters, and that, if the report of a

king's danger can gain castles without a coin's cost, Gilbert Matthew must be paid the land-rate, and be made at least its honorary governor to boot, if the French king lives or dies; though the latter is more likely. And now, John Lyon, with your scornful and beautiful daughter, you shall feel the vengeance of Gilbert Matthew, whilst he makes a countess execute it upon you both."

Such were the reflections of the deacon, as he prepared to fulfil the commands of Margaret of Artois, and to follow her to the council-chamber. When Gilbert Matthew entered the council, he looked with the utmost attention upon the scene which presented itself to his view, and gave a scrutinizing glance at the countenance of each of the principal persons engaged in the debate. The Countess of Artois sat beneath a canopy of state, her dignified person drawn up to its utmost height, whilst her brows, lowering and contracted, and the deep flush that overspread her cheeks, spoke the feelings of violent, ill-suppressed wrath. By her side stood Sir Walter d'Anghien, nephew and ward to the Earl of

Flanders. His aspect was that of composed attention; whilst, by now and then a slight motion of his lips, and the watchfulness of his eye, he seemed to be awaiting to take advantage of a proper opportunity to speak.

At the lower end of the table, and immediately facing the Lady of Artois, stood Philip Von Artaveld, as the spokesman and leader of the twelve citizens of Ghent who bore him company in his mission. His countenance expressed the most impassioned feelings, and he looked upon the Countess in a manner that shewed a spirit as high and as haughty as her own, whilst the following words burst from his lips at the moment Gilbert entered the apartment:

"It is not for such a purpose I am here. I will not betray the cause I have espoused, a cause of justice. I appear before the council but to declare to the Earl Lewis, that the murder of his bailiff, although rash and cruel, was alone the act of an incensed mob—an act reprobated by the better class of the citizens of Ghent, and for which they are in no respect accountable.

If expiation must be made, let vengeance fall upon the guilty — the guilty individuals who did this wrong; but let not our noble franchises suffer for it. Whilst I have life to protect them, they shall never be offered as the sacrifice or atonement for one wicked deed committed by an infuriated populace."

"You come, Philip Von Artaveld," said the Countess, "into this presence, after a strange fashion to make your peace — to dictate, not to submit. Would you offer a sufficient apology for the outrage committed by your party, in the murder of our bailiff, it should at least be made with humility. Nor can you expect those compliances from us, which were promised to you before the commission of this act."

"It is not to you, lady," replied Philip, "I would address myself; it is to the Earl, your son. I am here to ask his pardon for the outrage, and to treat with him upon the terms of peace, such a peace as can alone result from the restoration of all our franchises, and the amendment of our grievances. My business is with Lewis de Male,

and to him I will hereafter address myself. It is he who should sit here as head of the council of Flanders."

"But *I* sit here," said Margaret vehemently, "as chief of the council of Flanders. My rank, as widow of its late earl, as sole mistress of Artois, gives me the right to be of this council; and, in the absence of my son, I am second to none. Speak then to me, young man, supplicate my pardon, or," added she, as she looked round and motioned to one of her people, "or, by the value of my country, I will bid others deal with you, and you shall learn that I have a power to commit you to the keeping of the castellain of Male, as well as to sit in the chamber of its council. You have abused our lenity, despised our promises, and, after every compliance on our part, have broken the former treaty. What can you now expect, but that our will should hereafter dictate the measure of your rights?"

"It is most false," exclaimed Von Artaveld; "the treaty was broken by your own act; the persons of all our leaders were to be included in

the general pardon; and the bailiff entered the market-place, deputed by the highest authority, to demand the lives of John Lyon and of Peter du Bois. This was the infraction: and not with us can the charge of having first broken the treaty rest with any justice."

The Countess was about to reply, when Sir Walter d'Anghien, in a manner that evinced respect mingled with firmness of purpose, came forward, and thus addressed the council: "My lords, and you, noble lady, give me leave to speak; I claim it by the privilege I hold as a member of this council. The Earl of Flanders is not present, and however he may be incensed by the murder of Sir Roger d'Auterme, that act he would not in justice charge upon the body of the citizens; nor should their deputation be dismissed till the Lord Lewis has heard them in his own person. Let us not decide hastily; let the deputies have a fair occasion to state both the manner and the matter of their grievances at large; this done, it lies with my lord to accept or to refuse the terms that may be offered. And if after all we must be embroiled in the horrors

of civil strife, let us not begin it in our own chamber of council, by offering either insult or offence to the noble though misguided spirit that rules the conduct of Philip Von Artavêld. He is honourable, let him have fair play."

"Sir Walter," said the Countess, "you are a young man, new to every affair of state. Your life has hitherto been spent in those studies that adorn the scholar, but are of little service in the council; and though you have now quitted your parchments and your tongues to take upon you the soldier, you have not experience enough to become a useful counsellor."

"Lady of Artois," replied Sir Walter, "I know that I am yet inexperienced in the ways of state policy; but my studies would be wholly useless, unless I had gained from them the principles of justice."

"Sir Walter, madam," said Gilbert Matthew artfully, "has brought precepts with him from books which you can teach him how to direct in their application, for knowledge there may be in theory that would fail in practice. But might I suggest a measure, it should be that the citizens

gave hostages for their peaceable conduct before any terms are granted."

"Silence, Gilbert," said the Countess; "we want no suggestions from you; be pleased to remember you are our deacon of the pilots, but not our counsellor."

"Sir Walter d'Anghien," said Philip Von Artaveld, "you have spoken both with wisdom and honour, and I should be loath to become your foe by the different parties we must espouse should we come to extremities; yet to meet you in the field would be a noble opposition. I regret the murder of the bailiff, and I pledge my word that neither myself nor any of these citizens here assembled were in any manner accessary to its commission; and that I believe no farther violence has been offered derogatory to the power of the Earl of Flanders."

Ere Von Artaveld could conclude his address to Sir Walter d'Anghien and the council, the door of the chamber was suddenly burst open, and Lewis de Male, breathless with impatience and exertion, his eyes flashing fire, rushed into the room, holding a naked sword, and followed

by his attendants. The Earl exclaimed, in a voice scarcely articulate from passion, " Close the doors; arm yourselves my friends; arrest those men of Ghent, and the traitors they bring with them. I have escaped but with life from Andrighien. The accursed White Hoods have burnt my palace to the ground."

A general burst of indignation arose in the assembly; and Von Artaveld and the citizens looked upon each other with astonishment, vexation, and shame.

" These are your terms of peace," said the Countess, " these are the means of regaining your franchises."

" *We* at least are guiltless of this act," replied Von Artaveld; " let us not suffer then; let not Ghent share the ruin that should fall but on the guilty."

" Guilty!" exclaimed the Earl, " by Heaven you are all guilty. Arrest them I say, on the instant arrest them."

" No, my lord, no," said Sir Walter d'Anghien, " let us not lay hands upon the sacred persons of an embassy."

" True, true," answered Lewis; " our honour must not be sullied because of these infamous White Hoods. They shall feel our wrath. They shall perish to a man."

" My lord," said Von Artaveld, as he respectfully prepared to address the Earl, " I beseech you hear me; I came hither to speak on terms of peace."

" I will hear of no peace, no terms," replied the Earl; " I will not hear one word of any treaty, till I have taken vengeance on this villainous crew of rebels. Go — begone — quit my presence, you Von Artaveld, and all your embassy — nay offer not to speak, for I swear by my father's soul, that were not my own honour engaged in your present safety, I would this instant give you all to death, and your heads should hang upon our walls to feast the ravens. Leave me, and tell those who sent you, that when they shall drag to our feet John Lyon and all his associates, we will talk to them of peace, whilst the executioner does his office. But no supplications, no entreaty, no terms, shall avail without these wretches are sacrificed to

public justice: and whatever embassy shall dare approach us till these men are given up, let it be at their own peril, for their lives shall stand forfeited for their presumption, unless *my* pleasure be fulfilled!"

"Then all, I fear, is ended," said Von Artaveld, as he turned to depart; "we cannot betray our leaders to death, and so confound the innocent with the guilty."

The dispirited citizens quitted the chamber, in company with Philip Von Artaveld, and returned forthwith to Ghent, shewing, by their very looks and the dejection of their manner, the failure of their embassy. These men were worthy of pity, since they had been chosen by Philip amongst the most honourable of the citizens, and they had proceeded to Male with honest intentions both towards the Earl and towards the city.

After they were departed, the council continued to debate on the best measures to be adopted for quelling the insurrection, and punishing the White Hoods. It was finally agreed that Lewis de Male should instantly depart for

Lille, to procure the support and assistance of his chief nobles and allies; and that Margaret, Countess of Artois, accompanied by Sir Walter d'Anghien, and attended by Gilbert Matthew, should proceed to Bruges, in order, by their presence, to keep that town in the interests of the Earl, lest the citizens should league with their ancient rivals, the men of Ghent, by the latter offering terms of advantage to the commerce of Bruges, in case the inhabitants consented to join the insurrection.

Sir Walter d'Anghien warmly opposed this measure. He contended that it was impolitic either for himself or the Countess of Artois to commit their safety to the faith of the people of Bruges, till such time as they could collect a sufficient body of men-at-arms to carry with them, to hold in obedience the discontented party in that city.

The Countess overruled this objection, and chiefly because it had been made in opposition to her own opinion. It was, therefore, agreed that she should depart with Sir Walter, Gilbert, and a small retinue, for Bruges, as soon as she

could with convenience quit the castle of Male. These measures were hastily adopted, and as hastily executed; and how far prudently, will be seen in the next chapter.

CHAP. V.

We shall not enter upon a subject which is more particularly the province of the regular historian, that of detailing the various circumstances which occurred to increase the strength of the party denominated the White Hoods, or the causes which added to the displeasure of the Earl of Flanders. Suffice it to say, that in a short space of time, John Lyon had again taken the lead at the head of nearly ten thousand insurgents; whilst Philip Von Artaveld, and the better class of citizens, employed themselves in labouring to bring about, by honourable means, that result so desired by the city, which others hoped to achieve by violence, outrage, and plunder — upsetting the present state of things, that they might raise the fabric of their own fortune upon the ruin of their country.

It is at this period we resume the thread of our narrative, and we must at once conduct the

reader to an extensive plain between Ghent and Bruges, where, under the conduct of John Lyon, some thousands of the White Hoods had made a halt, in order to refresh themselves after a march. At a short distance from the main body, the van halted in a detached party. In the rear was seen several baggage carts, horses, waggons, and the usual impediments of men-at-arms. A few tents had been pitched in a hasty manner for the accommodation of the principal captains, or such of their wives and children (since many had followed them from Ghent,) as might be present on the march. In one of these tents belonging to the van, our old acquaintance Sir Simon de Bête was seated, in company with John Lyon and Peter du Bois, at a table, refreshing himself after the toils of the day's march.

For some time the three persons we have just named kept silence, till Sir Simon, who was never much given to the virtue of taciturnity, excepting when he was fairly talked down by his wife, thus broke the ice, as he poured out a cup of wine from a flagon that stood before him upon the camp table: "This march of yours,

John Lyon, to Bruges, has been so sudden, so unexpected, that what, to-day, with putting on my new suit of armour, which I assure you is a thing so new to me that I scarcely yet know how to walk in it, and am melting with heat, and what with making the best preparation I could on so short a notice to appear as I ought to appear, according to the consequence of one, who, to say nothing of being a knight, is master of the goldsmiths' company and burgomaster of Ghent, I have not yet had leisure to ask you, Master John, what we are now marching to Bruges for?"

"A most sapient question truly," said Du Bois, with a sneer, "and worthy of yourself, Sir Simon. You this morning assented to an expedition to Bruges, first joined it, and would afterwards inquire into its object. Such conduct is most fitting in a worshipful magistrate," continued Du Bois, with another sarcastic grin, "and I conclude you learnt both the wisdom and the utility of it when you dispensed judgment in the halls of Ghent."

"Peter du Bois," answered Sir Simon, "you

are somewhat too free with your remarks, and you remind me of those cross-grained curs that snarl upon the very masters who feed them. I am your associate (notwithstanding the difference of our stations in life,) in the cause of maintaining the noble franchises of my city, but I think such an association does in nothing remove those land-marks of respect that *my* circumstances, *my* rank, and *my* situation have placed between us. You have had the use of my purse too, and that should teach you gratitude, if my person cannot impose upon you a respectful deference." Here Sir Simon stole a glance downwards at his own little fat figure, as it shone with all the splendour of the haubergeon, garde-bras, and greaves, in which it had been so suddenly thrust in the morning. These accoutrements were so ill suited to the wearer, that Sir Simon, a peaceable citizen of his day, thus clad in armour, might be compared to some worthy citizen of our own times, who commits the extravagance of going to a masquerade in a character so foreign to his habits and education, that a spectator immediately detects that

the masquerade warehouse has contributed all which belongs to it, whilst the manner, the dialogue, and whatever emanates from the person himself, must still be referred to Change Alley or Cheapside.

" Upon my soul," added Sir Simon, after a moment's pause, " I cannot think what induced me to join you at all, especially after the trick you so shamefully played me, at a time when I was to have made my public address in the market-place of Ghent. And after all, I am my lord of Flander's very good friend; I wish Lewis no ill; so he would but hang that rascally fellow Gilbert Matthew, and take off the illegal impost upon gold, I should be satisfied. But how these ends are to be brought about by our sudden march to Bruges, I would now learn; for though I have no objection to uphold the franchises, and to lend them the support of my authority, and think this suit of armour very well becomes me, and is quite fitting with my rank as a knight, yet I must say, I was always more a man to wield the sword of justice at the head of a town-hall, than to bear it in the open

field. Therefore please, Master John Lyon, to tell us what we are all about to do?"

"I will briefly explain to you the cause of this sudden march to Bruges," said John Lyon, in reply. "The Earl of Flanders is so busied in collecting his forces at Lille, in garrisoning Oudenarde and other fortresses, that he has committed the oversight of leaving Bruges in so unguarded a state, that we can by a surprise oblige the citizens to join our cause, either with their own consent, or from intimidation, should they refuse it. We have hitherto left Bruges in peace, so that, lulled by a seeming security, the Countess of Artois, Sir Walter d'Anghien, and Gilbert Matthew, are still there. Now you know my plan Sir Simon; and either by fair or foul means we will this night sup in Bruges."

"And if you think of foul means, which I suppose implies fighting," answered Sir Simon, "pray, may I ask, what makes you, John Lyon, bring along with you, in this expedition, that sweet creature, your pretty daughter?"

"After what has chanced once to rob me of her," said John Lyon, "I will never consent to

leave her behind me again; I had rather she shared actual danger, when I was at hand to succour her, than leave her exposed to unexpected evils in my absence. Besides, I am not the only one who brings with him a part of his family into the field; many of our citizens are accompanied by their wives or daughters, and the women are stationed in the rear with the baggage, so that my damsel is not without company in this march."

"Aye, and some companions of the march there are," said Sir Simon, "that I could have wished had staid away, for I observed that the old witch Ursula is amongst them, whom, but for fear of our White Hoods, that hold her in reverence, I would myself long since have helped to a tar barrel and a faggot. Thanks be to our Lady, my wife is safe in Ghent; so for the present, I am a free man — that is," continued Sir Simon, correcting himself, "I am free from all uneasiness about her, and can now do as I please."

This absence of his helpmate was, in fact, a great cause of rejoicing to the little knight. He

had been beset with a thousand arts and wiles by his friends, John Lyon and Peter du Bois, in order to induce him to join them, and more from weakness than ill intention, Sir Simon had become one of their party, or rather he bore the appearance of a rebel, whilst in his heart he sincerely wished to see the Earl once more rule in peace in his own dominions. Some foolish feelings of consequence (for that was his weakest point), the hatred he bore to Gilbert Matthew, and the offensive impost on gold, had all had their share in his conversion; but we are much disposed to think, though Sir Simon never avowed it, that to escape from the perpetual larum of his wife's tongue had been the main cause of his joining the expedition to Bruges in so hasty a manner.

Soon after this conversation the insurgents continued their march, and before evening closed in upon them they arrived within view of the fine city of Bruges, where more than a hundred towers arose above its massive walls, that of the town-hall, then the loftiest building in Europe, rearing itself far above every surrounding one,

and appearing as it were an edifice of almost superhuman construction.

John Lyon was mounted on horseback, with a battle-axe in his hand, attended by the van, which included, together with Du Bois, his most daring and trusty adherents. They formed themselves into close files, and in this manner they resolved to advance as cautiously as possible towards the gates of the town, in the hope to surprise the watch.

When the van had advanced within bow-shot of Bruges, Sir Simon stopped the little ambling nag upon which he rode by the side of John Lyon, and declaring to that leader, that nothing but the last extremity should ever induce him to raise a weapon against the liege subjects of the Earl of Flanders, he proposed that he might be suffered to retreat into the rear, where the women and the baggage followed the men at arms; and that he would there become the companion, guardian, and knight of the pretty Anna, for whom he professed a most unlimited admiration and esteem.

John Lyon assented to this proposal, well

knowing that, although Sir Simon was a knight, he was no man-at-arms, but a kind hearted citizen and a devout squire of dames, when neither subjected to the jealousies nor the awful rule of his lady. Sir Simon, therefore, immediately departed to join the baggage train, which included the few women who had either voluntarily or involuntarily accompanied the expedition; and as he bustled through them in search of his young charge, soon found out Anna, and with the most perfect simplicity and good humour, assured her that he was the knight who had dedicated his services exclusively to her benefit and comfort. With Anna, therefore, for the present, we shall leave him, whilst we treat of other matters connected with our history.

John Lyon and his associates, assisted by the twilight that was fast gathering round, advanced so cautiously to the gates of the town, that he had almost reached the outward barrier ere he was descried by any one of the inhabitants. The watch, upon seeing a party of armed men so near the gates, and observing their heads to be covered with the terrific emblem of rebellion,

fled, and giving the alarm as they ran from the walls down the principal streets of Bruges to the market-place, they shouted "The White Hoods, the White Hoods, are upon us!" As they fled others joined them, who, knowing nothing of the matter, but hearing their cries, supposed the White Hoods had actually passed the gates, and, joining the dastardly watch, they ran as fast as any of them, shouting the same cry.

Two of the burgomasters of the town, whose duty it was to act as rulers for that day in Bruges, (the office being taken by the burgomasters by turns,) now came in all haste to one of the flanking towers of the gateway, there to hold a parley with the enemy; for so sudden had been the surprise of the rebels, that the cowardly watch had actually fled without even attempting to raise the drawbridge that led to the gates.

John Lyon, wielding his ponderous axe, and supported by his trusty adherents, had already commenced the attack, and had nearly succeeded in bursting open the gates, denouncing vengeance on the inhabitants if they refused or

combated the admission of the White Hoods within their walls. But, however they might threaten, hostile measures were not the object of the insurgents; they wished to induce the citizens of Bruges to join them in good-will, and without a murmur. A parley, therefore, was now willingly held at the gates. John Lyon addressed the citizens in the most specious manner, intimating his power, and his reluctance to use it against those whom he termed his very good friends and neighbours of Bruges.

The two burgomasters at length agreed in opinion, and promised to admit all the White Hoods within their walls, and to comply with their terms, on condition that no person in the town of Bruges should suffer injury, and no property be pillaged; and, above all, that the Countess of Artois (who was this very night to hold a solemn banquet in honour of the principal citizens of the place,) should be allowed two days to depart, with all her suite, unharmed, to join the Earl of Flanders at Lille, if such should be her pleasure. "Comply with these terms," said the elder of the burgomasters; "plight us your

faith, and swear upon the cross to observe them, and I will descend from this tower, and open to you the gates; and to-morrow you may consult with our citizens in the town-hall, and agree upon such terms as may seem best to you. You have surprised us, and I can see no other way to avoid bloodshed; for the people of Bruges will never consent to betray into your hands the noble Countess of Artois, or her suite. They have treated us well, and the Countess is this night to feast us at the royal palace in this city."

"And moreover," said the other burgomaster who parleyed from the tower, "there is to be some rare masking and mumming, with the performance of a mystery, in which I am to enact the part of Adam."

"And we will not disturb thy Eden," replied John Lyon: "no, most worshipful burgomaster, we will not bring in the demon of discord before his time. I accept the terms. The Countess of Artois and all her suite shall have leave to depart in safety within two days. I swear it to you upon the haft of my dagger, which has the form of a cross. Lodge our people and enter-

tain them courteously, and they shall pay for whatever they demand, at the rates of your own market. And now open your gates: we have a strong body in the rear."

"And bear my duty to the Lady Countess of Artois," said the bold and impudent Du Bois, "and tell her that myself and John Lyon, with our principal captains, and some damsels we bring along with us to Bruges, will this night taste of her good cheer. And though we come self-invited guests to her banquet, we will nevertheless support it with all honour. And if she wants a mummer to play the devil's part in her mystery, Peter du Bois is her man."

The burgomasters descended from the tower, and opened the gates to John Lyon and all his followers. Thus did the White Hoods of Ghent, by one bold and decisive measure, without the loss of a single life, in less than half an hour, enter within the walls of Bruges — of which city they might be said to be the masters; for so great was their force, that had it not been more for their ultimate advantage to reconcile the citizens by fair means (as an example to induce

other towns to join them), they were strong enough in numbers to have put them all to the sword.

John Lyon knew well his own interest; and, whatever his feelings might be towards the people of Bruges, he purposed to keep faithfully his plighted word. As a farther assurance of amity, he now hung his ponderous axe at the bow of his saddle, and taking from an attendant his white truncheon, he rode, side by side, between the chief burgomasters, and in this manner made his public entry into Bruges, conversing first with one upon the affairs or commerce of his city, and from time to time listening to the other, who made him acquainted with the many pleasant and quaint fancies he had designed for the entertainment of the Countess; and, lastly, apologized that he must leave him before he reached the town-hall, in order to give some farther directions about the manufacture of the leafy attire in which he was so soon to perform the part of Adam.

Peter du Bois, whose assurance was little less than that which is attributed to the dark per-

sonage he had offered to represent, no sooner heard this last speech than he invited himself to accompany the burgomaster, whose passion for enacting mysteries seemed to have driven all things else from his head. It is needless to say, that a leader of the White Hoods could this night do just as he pleased in Bruges. Peter's offer, therefore, to accompany the Flemish representative of the father of mankind was instantly accepted; and going with him to his house, he found it so handsome, and so well stored with wine, and all those good things which Peter loved next best to money, that he intimated his intention to fix his quarters in such a paradise, whilst his companions sought lodgings for themselves, as well as they could, throughout the city.

Adam could only bow and assent; but so little did he like the looks of his new guest, that he contrived to slip into his own pocket some gold spoons that lay exposed upon a table, as he shuffled by it, lest the sight of them might tempt the purposed tempter of mankind; for Peter

had so resolutely persisted in his desire to play the devil's part in the mystery, that the burgomaster had promised to furnish him with his own tail and horns, and all other things that might be necessary, as he had a complete wardrobe for all the mummers of Bruges; and he farther promised so to manage matters, that Du Bois should be allowed to undertake the part he desired to perform, and in which he complimented Peter by saying, he was doubtless already too well practised to need a rehearsal. Peter grinned at the compliment, as if he delighted in the consciousness of deserving it in its most literal sense.

Adam and the devil now proceeded to carry forward their plan in the most goodly fellowship together, since the Countess of Artois, though surprised and enraged beyond all bounds at the audacity of John Lyon and Du Bois, had not dared to refuse her consent, that these leaders and their captains of White Hoods should be present at her banquet. Still, to admit some of the most infamous traitors of Ghent, self-invited

to her solemn festival, was a degradation she could scarcely submit to, though her life might be endangered by a refusal.

It must be remembered how averse Sir Walter d'Anghien had been to the proposal which placed his own safety, and that of the Countess, within the custody of the people of Bruges. He had foreseen the danger which had fallen upon them; and, brave as he was in spirit, he could in no manner avert it, since, with the exception of one or two persons, he was the only knight skilled in arms whom Lewis de Male would spare to his mother during her stay in that city. Sir Walter had not even a dozen effective archers under his command at this moment. How then could he resist the White Hoods, who had this night poured by hundreds into Bruges? Mortified and disappointed to see himself thus helpless and beset on every side, Sir Walter was obliged to yield to circumstances; and he only advised the Countess to depart for Lille under his escort, as early as she could the next morning.

To gain an alliance with the town of Bruges, to prevent the work of the canal from being finished, were objects of vital interest with the insurgents. John Lyon, therefore, as well as Du Bois, did every thing he could to conciliate the citizens. They caused it to be proclaimed throughout the town, that any White Hood who should commit the least outrage in Bruges should suffer death on the spot. The men were quartered by companies in different parts of the town; and so well was the whole business arranged, that not one disorderly act was committed by the rebels during this memorable night.

In the mean time the Countess returned her thanks (for she felt she *must* do it) to John Lyon, for his permission to depart in safety within two days, and added her willingness to receive his daughter, Du Bois, and the captains of the White Hoods, at her banquet, according to the message of self-invitation Peter had conveyed to her by the burgomaster. And having desired this, her self-appointed chamber-

lain, to obtain for her a list of the names of all who were to become her unwelcome guests, Margaret of Artois attentively examined the paper, and commanding the attendance of Gilbert Matthew, appointed to give him a private audience in her own chamber.

CHAP. VI.

Gilbert Matthew waited but a few minutes for the Countess, before she came into the chamber. Her first action was to secure the door, her next to advance directly up to him. Gilbert, even Gilbert, started when he beheld her. Remarkable for its capability of expressing all her feelings, her countenance, at this moment, had such vehement passion imprinted on it, that she seemed as if possessed by one of those fiends who once were allowed to enter and to animate the very body of the sinner.

Contrary to her usual haughty manners, the Countess familiarly caught Gilbert Matthew by the arm, as she emphatically exclaimed, "Now, Gilbert, serve me but this night, and, by all the powers above that men invoke to swear by, I swear that I will make you the greatest officer in Flanders. Will you, will you serve me?"

"You may command me to obey your will in all things," replied Gilbert.

"And my will shall rejoice your inmost soul," said the Countess; "mark my words, and clearly understand their meaning."

"I will listen to obey," replied the obsequious deacon.

"It is well," said the Countess; "this night shall crown your wishes, and mine too. We thought it an insufferable insult to be obliged to entertain these White Hoods; but let us hail the occasion. We will make the revels glorious, Gilbert; we will make them such as shall rejoice the powers of darkness; and death shall sit the lordly master of our banquet. We will make a night of vengeance of it," added the Countess, in a deep and exulting tone of voice. "John Lyon and his daughter are our guests."

"I know they are," said Gilbert Matthew; "but think, lady, ere you determine. You are surrounded by hundreds of these White Hoods; on the least word from their leaders, they might rise, and put us all to the sword; not only every

person in this palace might suffer, but even in Bruges."

"I am aware of it," replied the Countess, "but we have nothing to fear on that score; I shall quit this city at the dawn of day, and soon be far beyond their power; Sir Walter d'Anghien has arranged all things to facilitate my retreat. Let us therefore only speak of our present business; and surely it is such as must delight thee, or I am much mistaken."

"I do not deny it," answered Gilbert, "if I can find the means to satisfy our vengeance in safety to ourselves."

"I can find the means," said the Countess, in a determined tone, "if you will but apply them. Remember, Gilbert, upon whom we are to act; thy ancient enemy John Lyon, thy rival, thy defamer, one who has a thousand times sought thy life, murdered thy kinsman, burnt thy dwelling to the ground, and one who but two years since insulted thee, when thou wouldest have made terms with him by marrying his daughter. Remember Anna's scorn; did she

not say, she should as soon think of wedding the public headsman as thyself? and cannot the remembrance of these things rouse thee?"

"It can, it does," replied Gilbert; "and I will not lose such an occasion to requite my injuries, though danger follows hard upon it."

"John Lyon," continued the Countess, "Anna, both are in thy power; obey me, and this night shall cancel the long debt of all thy injuries."

"What is it I must do?" enquired Gilbert; "speak quickly, noble lady, for as I came hither the guests were assembling in the banquet hall, and your absence, if longer continued, may excite surprise, if not suspicion. Be brief, then, I beseech you."

"We will waste no words," said the Countess, "we will do our deed, and never prate upon it. Ursula is in Bruges."

"Ursula in Bruges!" exclaimed Gilbert Matthew; "but what of that! it is not to *her*, gracious lady, you would apply for aid, since she is leagued with the White Hoods; and it is whispered, by the influence of Du Bois, she has acted

upon the minds of the common people to stir them up to rebellion."

"No matter," replied the Countess; "she joined their cause merely from a love of mischief. The time shall come when I will deal out to her the meed she so well deserves; for the present we must use her; she shall serve our purpose, and *without* knowing for *whom* it is designed. If you manage ably, she will not refuse what I would have from her. Here, take my purse, buy her help at any price."

"But perhaps," said Gilbert, "she may refuse, should she suspect I am of your household, and come from you."

"Not if you manage the matter to humour her crazy fancy about her gift of prophecy," replied the Countess—"and I question if she would refuse to aid any deed of mischief, be it for Earl or White Hood—she lives but to act cruelties, and, so they come to pass, she cares not upon whom. Besides, I repeat it, she traffics in what I want, and can supply it without knowing for *whom* it is designed."

"That is true," answered Gilbert; "I will

instantly seek her; but tell me, my noble mistress, in plain terms, lest I err in my commission, tell me what I am to purchase from the sorceress with this purse of gold."

"Look at me, Gilbert," said the Countess; "we will understand each other without a word but what is darkly spoken. Ursula is cunning in mischief; she can help the grave to its prey without the use of sword or dagger. She has means to offer up to the banquet of all devouring death victims who fall by that disease which leeches cannot cure, which has no name but such as fiends would give it; and the ministers of vengeance shall this night whisper it within our walls. Observe me — silence, but certainty — no outward violence, but yet a lifeless corpse. Now do you understand me?" added the Countess, as she fixed a dark and intelligent look upon Gilbert Matthew, "will you act my bidding?"

"I do understand it; I will, I will do it," answered Gilbert; "this night then ——"

"I will speak with you again when you return from Ursula," said the Countess. "A few words

will be sufficient. Remember, give the gold to that fiend of womankind; it will purchase her best aid; and then be brief, cautious, yet firm in execution."

"Aye, and triumphant," said Gilbert, with a bitter smile of malignant joy; "to-morrow shall the grave and the worm claim their prey alike over the lion and his whelp. Where shall I see you, lady, on my return?"

"In my oratory," answered the Countess.

"What, before the cross?" asked Gilbert Matthew, in a tone of irony.

"Aye, even before the cross," replied the Countess; "and if it tell a tale, I will worship it as churchmen do; and call it miraculous as devoutly as doth a hooded monk. But we, Gilbert, believe no idle dreams of dotard priestcraft."

"And fear none," said Gilbert, sternly. With these words he bowed to the Countess, and quitted the chamber.

We must now conduct the reader to the banquet of the Countess of Artois; the hall was splendidly decorated with all the magnificence of

feudal grandeur, and the tables, spread with every delicacy that could tempt the appetite, were rendered almost too dazzling for the eye, by the quantity of massive gold and silver plate with which they were loaded, whilst a thousand torches and waxen tapers spread the most brilliant light, and numberless vases of flowers and of perfumes sent their delicious odour through the apartment.

The hall was crowded by all the principal citizens of Bruges, the suite of the Countess, and the leaders and chief captains of the White Hoods. The former part of the assembly appeared in magnificent habits of silks or stuffs, embroidered and thickly set with jewels; the latter were still partially armed, a circumstance that shewed but too plainly the means by which they had gained the seats they now occupied at the board, and that the possession of power on the one hand, and the fear of its exertion on the other, had alone this night caused so singular and so unnatural a combination of persons at the revels of a princess, who thus feasted at once the loyal subject and the insolent rebel.

The Countess, glittering with precious jewels, and covered with robes of velvet and ermine, preceded by her chamberlains, each bearing a torch, entered the hall as the minstrels announced her approach by the loud and united concord of their various instruments; she bowed to the assembly, and took her seat beneath a canopy of state, at the upper end of the board. Margaret now smiled on all, and, talking without her accustomed haughtiness of manner, maintained the dignity of her station with ease and propriety; her smile was gracious, but still there was "a lurking devil in her eye;" and a paleness overspread her countenance, that looked more like the bloodless colour of a corpse than the complexion of constitutional delicacy.

She had purposely seated the leaders of the White Hoods near her own person, excepting John Lyon, who, by her express desire, was placed opposite to her, at the lower end of the board. Anna was seated near the Countess; she looked uneasy, and seemed to feel the impropriety that existed in her father, Du Bois, and even herself, being present at such a festival,

when they had entered Bruges in a manner so hostile to the Earl.

But the person of all present who, it might be supposed, would most have felt this impropriety, appeared the least sensible of it. Margaret of Artois was even profuse in her attentions to the leaders of the White Hoods. The greater number of them had never before been in her presence; the affability of her manners, for the present, therefore, did not surprise them, by contrasting it with her former haughty and almost insolent carriage; but those of her own suite, who well knew the temper of the Countess, could see how hollow and insincere were these outward expressions of courtesy, and that nothing but some powerful and extraordinary motive could, for an instant, thus induce their mistress to bow, to condescend, to mould her humour into the easy form of affability. They saw plainly that she had some specific object in view, whatever that might be. Her civilities, however, were overstrained, they were not like the gentle courtesies of one who is desirous to perform the part of an hostess to her guests, with a sponta-

neous feeling of good-will towards them; on the contrary, the manner of the Countess spoke a determined effort—a resolution to let no occasion escape her that she could turn to her advantage.

Every person at the board was honoured by Margaret of Artois with some individual mark of attention, and she complimented the leaders of the White Hoods, by pressing them to partake of a dish which was served up as an *entremet* of the highest delicacy, being a roasted peacock, which having the full plumage of the spreading tail restored to it, appeared not only adorned with its iris feathers, but also ornamented with a chain of the finest gold; even Anna was solicited to partake of this complimentary dish, but she declined it, and as she sate at the board, which she graced by her modest beauty, and the dignified simplicity of her manners, she looked melancholy, and spoke little. John Lyon, surprised at the courtesy of the Countess, so different from what he had been led to expect, endeavoured, on his part, to acknowledge it by shewing her a degree of deference and respect he had of late evinced to no one.

Sir Simon de Bête, who had placed himself as near as possible to Anna, was necessarily seated not far distant from Margaret of Artois, and presented a most comical mixture of good humour, consequence, and awkward courtesy. Sir Simon was, indeed, one of those who had not been "born great," but had suffered "greatness to be thrust upon him." For although, at the period of our narrative, the honour of knighthood was very rarely obtained, excepting as a mark of chivalrous distinction, yet Sir Simon had gained his from a high quarter, though bestowed upon him from a very different motive. The fact was, that he had accumulated a large fortune by honest industry in his calling, and had lent a considerable sum of money to the late Earl of Flanders, who, unable to repay the debt, took advantage of the little goldsmith's weakest point, and, flattering his vanity, stopped his mouth by a slap on the back with his sword, and at once created him a knight. Thus was the new-made man of honour as effectually silenced as is a dun among ourselves, when his creditor can gain a seat in a certain assembly.

Yet Sir Simon's honours did not altogether sit well upon him; he thought too much about them, and paraded them in the same way a varlet would his master's clothes, should he chance to wear them by one of those freaks of fortune, that suddenly raise the low, and sink the higher born. Sir Simon had not, in early life, been accustomed to the first order of the society of his own city, and still less to that of the court; so that, although he had played the part of the great man, with as much consequence as his little person and shallow brains could devise, amongst the burghers and burghers' wives in the city; he felt really awkward, and even embarrassed, when he found himself seated, for the first time in his life, near the Countess of Artois, and in the midst of her suite.

But Sir Simon, though embarrassed, was not a man to be overpowered by the greatness of others. After an effort or two to overcome his own sheepish feelings, he ventured to maintain his share in the conversation, and to shew even his consequence, by paying sundry officious attentions, with a most important air, that had better

been left alone. Having broken the ice, he gained courage, fortified it by several cups of wine, and at last talked almost as much as he used to do when he occupied the great chair at the Moon, to the edification of the citizens of Ghent.

The Countess of Artois, whose object was this night "to gain golden opinions from all sorts of people," encouraged the prating humour of Sir Simon, and, smiling graciously upon him, listened with patience to his long-winded speeches, containing the enumeration of his dignities, and accepted his attentions with the utmost courtesy.

The banquet had proceeded for some time, when the Countess noticed the absence of a few of her guests; she enquired for them of Gilbert Matthew, who stood in attendance at her right hand as soon as he had joined the assembly. "Where is such a one, and such a knight?" said the Lady Margaret, as she named them severally; "and where is the burgomaster Guisebert, and our honoured guest, Master Peter du Bois?"

"Gracious lady," replied Gilbert, "the

honourable persons you have named are all of them to perform some part either in the maskings or the mystery, and they are so busied in their preparation, that they have declined entering the hall till the revellers come in a body to play their fantasies and games."

"I had forgot that part of our night's diversion, Master Gilbert," replied the Countess, "but do you give orders, that they are cared for, and well attended; our guests must lack nothing this night that we can do to pleasure them."

The Countess again renewed her attentions to the party at her board, whilst a band of minstrels, gaily habited, and having embroidered upon their coats the lion sable langue d'or, played so cheeringly upon their different instruments, that they made the vaulted roof of the old hall ring with the "concord of sweet sounds." The banquet was nearly ended, when the folding-doors at the extremity of the hall were thrown open, and the music of a second band of minstrels was heard from an outer apartment.

Immediately, six men, dressed in hairy coats, hung about with ivy leaves, entered the room,

wearing masks, and dancing, as they followed the minstrels that preceded them. Next appeared the portly burgomaster, who was to represent the father of mankind. He was attired in his robes of office, to which were added festoons of fig leaves made of green silk. He bore in one hand an instrument of horticulture, and in the other an enormous cabbage; these being designed as appropriate emblems, to signify that the first occupation known to man was that of a gardener. His wife, who represented Eve, was of a figure just as broad as long: she came forth sparkling with jewels and embroidery, and with a pair of hanging sleeves sufficient to have contained all the apples which she was designed this night to pilfer, for the temptation of Adam, in the course of the performance; whilst Peter du Bois, who played the devil, in a mask made to represent a serpent's head, with a couple of red horns, flourished his tail, and shewed his cloven feet, with a grimace that promised he was quite at home in his part.

Several persons followed, attired in Flemish habits, but having upon their shoulders an ample

pair of wings, to shew they represented angels. The cherubims of Eden, with their flaming swords, were not forgotten; and even the devil himself had his attendant angels or spirits, distinguished from those of the heavenly order by their usual appendages of the tail and horns.

The performance now commenced by a chorus, who set forth, in the verse of the period, the argument of the piece, accompanied by a minstrel playing upon the pipes; so that this opening speech was rather a kind of recitative than actual declamation. Adam now came forward to open the first scene by a soliloquy, in which he descanted on the nature of womankind (though woman was not yet supposed to be made), and intimated his desire to go to sleep, in order to facilitate her creation. The burgomaster Guisebert, who performed this part, did not possess a memory equal to his zeal for the enactment of mysteries; so that he was frequently out in his speech, and was often prompted by the devil, who suggested whatever might be necessary to help him through his difficulties.

After the performance of the first part, the "salvage men" came forward and danced, to the great delight of the company, whilst the minstrels and choruses played and sung all the while. After the dance, a large machine was wheeled into the hall. It represented a garden full of apple-trees, the fruit hanging thickly upon them; as the theft from the forbidden tree, and the fall of man, by the instigation of the devil, were the subject of the second part of the performance.

These preliminaries were but clumsily managed, and occupied more than the usual space of time, as the famous mystery-monger, Master Guisebert, was not altogether so expert in his management of the mechanical accompaniments as the jongleurs and minstrels, to whom the business regularly belonged. In spite of every contrivance, the apple-tree that was to tempt Eve would tumble down, and Adam himself proceeded to help the devil in giving it a firmer footing. But whatever happened, the Countess of Artois was determined to be pleased with it; so that she made not the least complaint at such

bungling management, and endeavoured to fill up the pause it occasioned by renewed attentions to her guests.

During this interval one of the maskers, whose part was not very conspicuous, being that of one of the angels, had placed himself so near to Anna, that he could speak to her without being overheard by any of the company, as, immediately after the supper, she had somewhat withdrawn herself from the rest, and sat, melancholy and thoughtful, in the recess of a window, whilst every one around was occupied with the gaieties of the evening. The masked angel now ventured to address her. As his well-known voice met her ear, she started, and exclaimed, in a tone of surprise, "Gracious Heaven! that is the voice of Henry de ——"

"Peace, peace," said the masker, "I conjure you be silent; no matter who I am, so as I am but this night a guardian spirit to watch over your safety: hear me, for I must be brief. I have some cause to think that both your father and yourself stand in danger. The Countess and Gilbert Matthew were in secret conference

before the commencement of the banquet; they passed close by me, as they left the oratory of the former, but without observing me, and I heard them pronounce your name and your father's in a tone, and with a mystery in their discourse, that makes me tremble when I think upon it. Take my advice; seize the first opportunity of withdrawing your father from the banquet. Happen what may, express no surprise, neither notice that I am in any way known to you; and on no account suffer either your father or yourself to be enticed again to this palace, till the Countess shall have departed for Lille. Thus much I can do for you, by warning you of some lurking danger. For the rest, your father's open rebellion against the Earl of Flanders prevents all possibility, on my part, that I should serve him beyond the present hour."

"Holy Mary!" exclaimed Anna, "how is it that we can be in danger, where all seem thus tranquil and rejoicing. I thought there had been but one sad heart in all this gay assembly," she added, with a sigh. "Tell me more, I

beseech you, if you know more. You have alarmed my fears, but without giving them any certain direction."

"Endeavour to withdraw your father from the banquet; but still be cautious how you do it; watch a favourable opportunity, rather than make one. I know nothing but what I have told you. I must leave you, for the Countess looks this way. May all the Saints of Heaven guard and save you."

The masker instantly withdrew somewhat apart from Anna, and placed himself within a recess of another of the windows, whence he could observe whatever past in the chamber. At this moment he heard the voice of Sir Simon de Bête, which rose above all the other voices at the table, as he was addressing the Countess in a manner of unusual gaiety. "Thanks, noble lady," said Sir Simon, "your ladyship's countessship has this night feasted us most gallantly; and by the faith of a true man, although I wear a white hood, I wish no ill either to you or to the Earl of Flanders, your noble son; and may these quarrels soon end, say I. Be so good, my lady, as to

make my duty to the Earl, and please to tell him, that if he will but think a little, and take off that cursed impost upon gold, and just change a few other things that go amiss, and just see that some of his officers, that I don't name out of respect to your countess-ship, are a little more civil to their betters, why I never doubt but we shall all have a happy peace and be comfortable together. So by your leave, noble lady, I propose one general cup of wine that shall go round the board, in requital of your good cheer, to the health of the gallant Earl of Flanders."

"You are both generous and courteous, Sir," said the Countess; "and I trust that none of my guests, here present, however they may think on state matters, will refuse to pledge their hostess when she drinks from this cup to the health of her son. Gilbert, *you* shall bear the goblet round. Come, Gilbert, give us of the choicest Hippocras, such as we take for the wine of repose."

Gilbert Matthew now advanced towards a buffet, that stood near the upper end of the board, and poured forth wine into two large cups of gold. He then paused a moment, and open-

ing a comfit-box, he appeared to be busied in spicing the cups.

" Shall I assist you, Gilbert?" said the masker who had spoken to Anna, as he now advanced towards the buffet.

" No," replied Gilbert shortly, " I want no aid in doing my duty."

" Shall I help you to carry round the cups then," again said the masker, " or shall I present *this* cup (he added, as he took the one which Gilbert had last spiced,) to the lady countess?"

" No, no," replied Gilbert hastily; " put that cup down again. And who are you, who make yourself thus busy where you are not wanted?"

" No matter who I am, Gilbert," answered the masker, " it is of little consequence, since you will not accept my aid."

" I thank you, however, for offering it," said Gilbert; " but the Countess has named me as the cup-bearer, and I must not disobey her orders."

The masker left Gilbert, again crossed the chamber, and stationed himself alone within the recess of the window as before. Gilbert Matthew

advanced to the dais, knelt at the feet of the Countess, and presented her with the cup. She held it a moment in her hand, extended it, and, having pronounced the name of the Earl, she drank of the contents, and straight returned the cup to Gilbert, who next presented it to Sir Simon de Bête, and to all those persons who were standing near the lady of Artois.

Gilbert now advanced a few paces to offer the cup to John Lyon, but, as if recollecting himself, he suddenly returned to the buffet, saying aloud, "The cup is nearly empty; our guests must be honoured with a full measure to pledge a health to the Earl." He then filled it from the flagon to the brim. But as the masker stedfastly fixed his eye upon him, he observed that Gilbert dexterously contrived to exchange the cups; leaving the one just filled upon the buffet, and taking up another in its stead. Gilbert immediately advanced with it to John Lyon; the masker followed his steps, and, ere John could take the cup from him, the masker said to the cunning deacon, "Gilbert, let me drink, for a guardian spirit of

a higher world than this is may surely take precedence in the honour-cup before yonder guest, who is a mere mortal."

Gilbert Matthew, seeing himself beset by the masker, suddenly pushed past him, and in the next moment eagerly presented the cup to John Lyon, as he turned about his head, and facing the masked angel, said to him, "Nay, it shall not be so; our guests must be honoured first to-night, though the angel Michael himself should ask the cup instead of thee."

Whilst Gilbert was speaking, John Lyon pronounced the Earl's name in a low voice, for he could not pledge Lewis with good-will, and, raising the cup to his lips, drank of the contents, and once more resumed his seat. Whilst this was passing, some of the "salvage men" crossed the chamber immediately in front of Anna, as they went to renew the dance at the extremity of the hall, so that she neither saw the masker near her father, nor knew that he had partaken of the cup.

"And now," said Gilbert Matthew, as he ap-

proached Anna, "most beauteous daughter of John Lyon, you will not refuse to pledge a health to the noble Earl of Flanders."

"I am most willing to do so," replied Anna; "to pledge the Earl's health in all duty as it becomes his vassal."

She extended her hand to take the cup; in doing so her eye glanced upon the face of Gilbert Matthew; it was livid, whilst terror and confusion seemed strongly imprinted upon every line; but his eyes were fastened on the ground; he dared not raise them to meet the looks of Anna; whilst his trembling hands, his short and frequent breathings, all seemed to speak some powerful struggle between conscience and an evil will that warred together in his soul. Anna was struck by Gilbert's appearance, and took the cup from his hand in a hesitating manner. She now looked towards the Countess, and observed that Margaret of Artois stood motionless as a statue, with her eyes fixed on Anna, whilst apparently engaged in listening to the discourse of Sir Simon de Bête. Anna raised the cup, and advanced it to her lips, when the masker (who had glided

near her as the "salvage men" crossed the chamber, and had watched the countenance as well as the steps of Gilbert Matthew,) now suddenly came up, past quickly by her, and said in a low, but distinct voice, "Do not taste the cup."

Struck by these words, the recollection of the former warning rushed upon her mind. Anna shuddered, and, having merely pressed the brim of the cup to her lips, but without tasting one drop of the contents, she returned it into the hands of Gilbert Matthew, who took it from her trembling, and with his eyes still fixed upon the ground.

Gilbert withdrew to the buffet, and put down the cup. Anna now became most seriously alarmed for her father, and, forgetting all else but her fears on his account, she hastened to him, and conjured him in so agitated a manner to retire from the banquet, that he could not resist her importunity. "I will retire with you, Anna," said John Lyon; "yet why you should so urge me I know not; but I must first, my child, bid adieu to the Countess of Artois, since she entertained us at her banquet with more

honour and regard than we could have hoped to find."

"Oh do not tarry for ceremonials, my father!" said Anna, "but go without loss of time, there may be danger in delay."

"Yet I must first take leave of my hostess," answered her father; "and fresh air will revive me. I know not how it is, but I feel strangely oppressed, and my head is also affected."

"Nay," said Anna, "then do not stand for form; say you are sick, that will be your excuse; say anything so you but quit this chamber."

"I am sick, indeed, my child," replied her father; "my head is dizzy, and I feel hot within me."

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Anna, "how pale you look, my father. Oh, let us instantly away."

"Lead on," said John Lyon, "I will rise and follow you."

"Tell the Countess of Artois," said Anna to an attendant who was standing near, "that my father is seized with a sudden sickness, so that he cannot tarry the ceremony of quitting the hall,

as he would otherwise have done with all respectful observance. And now, my father, lean on my arm, for you seem to need help."

Supported by his daughter, John Lyon immediately withdrew from the banquet-hall to his hostelrie in Bruges, a place where many of the leaders of the White Hoods had taken up their quarters. This house was near the palace. John Lyon passed on towards it without speaking one word to Anna; but she observed that he breathed with difficulty, and, unable longer to restrain the expression of her fears, she said, in the most agitated manner, "Oh, my father, did you taste that cup?"

"Yes," replied John Lyon, "I did indeed;" and he added, in a tone of alarm, "but wherefore do you question me about it."

"I was warned to forbear it," said Anna.

"Thanks be to God," exclaimed John Lyon; but he did not add another word.

The father and daughter soon reached the hostelrie, where Anna instantly called for assistance to help her parent to his apartment, since, with the utmost difficulty, he had come thus far;

but no sooner had he entered the door, than he uttered a loud shriek, and fell senseless at her feet.

The screams of the unhappy girl soon brought the persons of the house, and the greatest confusion prevailed. John Lyon was placed upon a bed, and a leech of much note, who lived near the spot, was instantly sent for; whilst Anna, scarcely knowing what she did, conjured the master of the house that he would go to the palace and acquaint her father's friends, Sir Simon de Bête and Peter du Bois, with his danger.

We shall not dwell upon the dreadful scene that followed. The leech came, and immediately declared that he could do nothing to save the life of the sufferer, though he hoped he might be able to mitigate the agonies of death.

Anna saw her father's danger, and that his mortal career was drawing to its close. With the most anxious and tender care, therefore, she did all that she could do to sooth the horrors of his dying hour, and procured the attendance of a monk to pray by him. And whilst her coun-

tenance, white as monumental marble, her fixed gaze, and her bosom almost convulsed with the intensity of her feelings, bespoke the agony of her mind, she suffered no expression of despair to escape her lips, lest she should disturb the last hours of her parent.

The agonies of pain endured by John Lyon, as the deadly poison worked within him, were such as would be too dreadful for description. His eyes seemed ready to start from his head, his body swelled, and his face became black and livid; his groans were such as would have almost moved the hearts of his murderers; as his innocent child, who refused to quit the spot whilst a spark of life remained, threw herself beside his bed, and, with clasped hands, seemed to implore Heaven to accept those prayers for her father's release, which her heart formed, but her tongue refused to utter.

At length all pain ceased, and John Lyon appeared to be fully possessed of all his faculties, though his watery eye, his limbs incapable of motion, and his cold and clammy hand, shewed, but too plainly, that this interval of ease was only

the certain mark of his speedy dissolution. He spoke clear, though faintly, and begged that every one but his child, Sir Simon, and the monk, would quit the room: in this he was obeyed. The dying man was now supported in his bed, and fixing a last gaze upon his daughter, he begged her to forgive him all his unkindness to her, and all those errors in which he had persisted, notwithstanding her endeavours to induce him to relinquish them.

"Oh my father," said Anna, "do not talk thus, do not ask forgiveness of me, it is I who should crave it of you; pardon your child I beseech you, my dear father, when she tells you, that, without your sanction, she has bestowed her affections upon one who promised to ask her hand of you; upon one who this night, disguised amongst the maskers, saved her life by a timely warning to taste not of the fatal cup that has destroyed you."

John Lyon, at hearing these last words, raised his dying eyes to Heaven, and immediately after, in a voice yet fainter and fainter, blessed his child, and prayed she might be happy in the

choice of her affections. He now turned to Sir Simon de Bête, and then looked again towards Anna: "I have nothing to leave my poor child," said the dying father, "except my last blessing: she will be an outcast, a friendless orphan. May all the Saints of Heaven have pity on her, nor visit upon her innocent head the sins of her wretched father."

Sir Simon, who stood by the bed-side, his cheeks bedewed with tears, that coursed each other down his face, had every now and then attempted to speak, but his voice was almost inarticulate, from the depth of his sorrow. He now wrung the hand of his dying friend, and, turning suddenly towards Anna, clasped her in his arms, whilst a burst of passionate feeling accompanied the action: "I will be her father," said Sir Simon; "and so may God deal with me as I will be to her a good father; I will shelter, cherish, and hold her to my heart as the child of my soul, and the orphan of my friend."

The dying father evidently heard these words. Assured of the future comfort and protection of his child, a gleam of joy for a moment passed

over his livid features, and once more gave life and animation to his eye; he looked up again to Heaven in thankfulness, moved his lips, and grasped the hand of the honest goldsmith; but the joy he felt, and the expression of it, were alike momentary. The anxiety of a father had been relieved, and he had nothing more to do with life. John Lyon sunk back in his bed; the damps of death were settled upon his brow, his throat became convulsed, his eyes fixed and watery, his hands caught at the bed linen, then suddenly became motionless, till the last terrible pangs seemed to hold a struggle with nature, as if the body and the spirit parted with violence; once more he spoke a few unconnected words: "Have mercy — a sinful man — bless my child, save her — a wicked life, but let this — mercy, mercy." The last word was scarcely pronounced, when convulsions seized the unhappy man, and distorted his features with the last agonies of death.

Sir Simon saw it, and, willing to spare Anna such a dreadful spectacle, yet reluctant to tear her from her father till all was past, with an

intuitive feeling of kindness, that goodness generally supplies even to those who are least refined by education, he clasped the weeping girl in his arms, and buried her head in his own bosom, as he hung over her, lest she should look round and witness the last struggles of her parent.

All was soon past — John Lyon was a lifeless corpse. There was a deep silence in the chamber of death, and for some time no one broke it. Sir Simon was the first to speak, as he still supported Anna, whose feelings at length found vent, and even relief, in a violent burst of sorrow. Sir Simon composed his countenance, and spoke in an impressive but gentle tone: "My dear child," said the good man, "let us seek comfort of *Him* who is the giver of all comfort. Let our prayers follow him, whilst we endeavour to turn our thoughts from the mortal body to the immortal soul; kneel with me my child;" and he led Anna apart from the bed of death, took each of her hands within his own, and then raising them in the attitude of prayer, he looked at the monk.

The holy man advanced, and performed the office for the dead, and concluded the service

with an address to the Virgin for the repose of the soul of the departed. Anna still continued to weep bitterly, but could not speak, except now and then uttering a few passionate and unconnected words, expressive of her sorrow. Sir Simon had too much proper feeling to offer the usual tribute of condolence at such a moment. He endeavoured, therefore, to sooth the afflicted orphan, by leading her mind to think of a better world; and bestowed on her those kind attentions, expressed more in acts than in words, that might make her feel, that, though fatherless, she was not friendless.

In this manner he gently removed her from the chamber of death, and recommending her to the kindness and attentions of the damsels in the house, he desired she might be placed upon her bed, but not disturbed with intrusive consolation, in the hope that exhausted nature would at length afford the poor sufferer some interval of repose from the sorrows and the remembrance of the dreadful scene she had witnessed.

On returning from Anna, the first person Sir Simon met was Peter du Bois, who expressed a

wish to speak to him in private. The goldsmith immediately granted this request. "And now, Peter," said Sir Simon, as he entered the chamber, "I was never a man to like fighting; but you love it as fighting dogs do a quarrel. But on such an occasion as *this*, by all the Saints above us, if you will now draw your sword and follow me, the sun shall not rise before I have done justice on that cruel, smooth-tongued woman, and that accursed, cold-blooded devil Gilbert Matthew, for the murder of John Lyon. Come, follow me, and shew yourself a man. We will raise the White Hoods."

"Stay," said Peter; "you shall not pass out of this chamber for any such purpose. Are you mad? or are you only now turned valiant to ruin us all? I tell you, that if you this night draw a sword against the Countess of Artois or Gilbert Matthew, all Bruges will be upon us. I know our White Hoods would rise fast enough to avenge John Lyon, but we should lose by it the best alliance we have yet made for our cause — by gaining over the citizens of Bruges; yet I will avenge my uncle as well as you, but it shall

be by carrying on the *war* to the *ruin* of the Countess, her son, Gilbert Matthew, and all their race."

With such arguments did Peter du Bois for the present prevail with Sir Simon de Bête to give up his intention of taking an immediate revenge for the death of his ancient friend. And so artfully did Peter work upon the mind of the simple but honest-hearted knight, that Sir Simon at length promised not to contradict the report which Peter had given out, that John Lyon had been suddenly seized with a fit that had caused his death; and the cunning Du Bois, by the assistance of a large bribe, procured the concurrence of the leech in this assertion. The monk was an old man, and a lover of peace: he was therefore more desirous that the business should be hushed up, than be made the cause of tumult in the city.

The news of the death of John Lyon struck grief and dismay into the hearts of all the White Hoods; for he had been their favourite leader. It was now resolved by the principal persons amongst these bands of insurgents, that, in con-

sequence of John Lyon's death, the whole body of their people should return on the morrow to Ghent to conduct his remains to the church of St. Nicholas, where he was to be buried with the utmost magnificence. *

The story that Du Bois had caused to be circulated in Bruges, of John Lyon's having expired in a fit, was universally received as true. With many, the event caused joy and exultation. And when the Earl learnt the tidings at Lille, he was deceived as well as the rest, for, although Lewis was the enemy of this rebel leader, and wished his death, yet he would never have sought it by other means than those of public justice; and though he knew his mother to be at once crafty and vindictive, he never dreamed to what an extent she would dare exert her power through the agency of Gilbert Matthew. Conscious that, after what had happened, Burges was no longer a place of safety, Margaret of Artois, accompanied by Gilbert and a few of her suite, departed in secret from the city as soon as the dawn afforded

* A magnificent tomb was erected to the memory of John Lyon, which was destroyed during the French revolution.

her sufficient light to set forward on her way to Lille.

The next morning, after the death of John Lyon, Sir Simon found himself in better spirits than might have been expected. He was a man of good and kind feelings; one who could never look upon a scene of distress without affording it a sympathising tear. His feelings, however, were more acute than lasting. To that sentiment of sorrow that weighs heavy upon the mind, and fastens on the heart, till it often destroys its vital energies, Sir Simon was a stranger; indeed, of such a grief he had not, from his own experience, the least notion. He did not, therefore, readily comprehend what might be the feelings of others in a time of bitter affliction. John Lyon was *dead;* for him no more could be done, and to regret him he thought was useless. But Anna was still *living,* and much could be done for her; and much did the worthy man resolve to do for her. "For she is such a good, sweet creature," thought Sir Simon, "that it would be a pity to see her pine away her days in want; and I will be a father to her, and Lady Judith

may rate me for it as much as she likes; and when the storm begins, and the worst comes of it, I can but go the oftener to the Moon. But I will not think of my wife now; I will go and see the poor orphan, and that will be a sight to teach me patience to bear my own crosses at home."

With this kind-hearted intention Sir Simon was about to leave his chamber, when Peter du Bois entered it, and, turning the discourse on the helpless state of his cousin, he boldly demanded that Anna should be resigned to his care as her *nearest kinsman*. Sir Simon cut him very short, for he neither wanted courage nor spirit, in a cause where justice and humanity demanded the exertion of either. "Look you, Master Peter du Bois," said Sir Simon, "the dying man gave *me* the charge of his daughter, and I shall stick by his will; and though you are a good soldier, Peter, yet I do not scruple to tell you, that your morals and your licence of speech render you neither a fit nor desirable man to be the guardian of an innocent girl; and so rest satisfied; she is not for you, friend Peter. And,

considering her own natural parts and good qualities, as merit should be honoured, I must say that I, being a knight, master of the goldsmiths' company, and burgomaster of Ghent, am therefore in every way the most proper person in all the city to protect and bring into life such a delicate damsel as this pretty orphan."

Sir Simon clapt on his cap, took up his staff, and, walking smartly past Peter du Bois, left him to cogitate upon his determination thus expressed, whilst he went to visit his charge. The good Sir Simon found Anna deeply afflicted, but more composed than on the previous evening. He had sought her, resolving in his own mind, this morning, to offer to her some words of consolation, such as are usually administered by friends to those who are smarting under the wound occasioned by a recent loss of one truly dear to them. But some how or other the good knight could only get through his first speech, when, looking at the beautiful, but deeply dejected countenance of Anna, he burst into tears, wept like a child, and forgot all his arguments of

consolation, excepting that which arises from the true sympathy of a feeling heart.

At length he was obliged to leave her to prepare for her removal to Ghent. "I will come and conduct you to our city, my child," said Sir Simon. "God bless you — do not weep — there, there, now do be comforted, and you shall be my daughter — and we will love one another — and I will go with you myself to mass — and I'll comfort you as well as I can — and I'll give you a portion, if we find out the masker, and he proves an honest young man, and is worthy of you — and all honour shall be paid to your father's memory. So now do cheer up, and I will cherish you — and I will attend your poor father's interment myself, dressed in my burgomaster's gown, and the two silver maces shall be carried before me."

CHAP. VII.

Upon the following day, Anna, who was really sick both in mind and body, in consequence of the late painful events, was persuaded by Sir Simon not to leave her chamber till the corpse of her father had been removed from the place where he died; and, as the sight of a countenance that was wholly changed by the dreadful effects of poison, could only have filled her soul with horror, she was prevailed upon to relinquish a last view of his remains. Sir Simon, who had been active in providing for her comfort, caused her to be removed from Bruges in a litter, under the conduct of some of his own people, charged to convey her in all safety to Ghent, as the worthy goldsmith had determined she should at once become an inmate of his own house.

Anna left Burges without bidding adieu to any one, excepting a poor widow woman, who had been called in to assist in performing the last

offices to the deceased; and who had afterwards, with great feeling and humanity, watched by the bed of the afflicted girl during the remainder of the night. Anna enquired of the poor woman where she lived in the town of Bruges, gave her a piece of gold, and promised that, should it ever be in her power, she would hereafter befriend her, for the widow had said she had a family of small children to provide for.

Upon the same morning that Anna quitted Bruges, all the White Hoods set out to follow the corpse of their late leader, John Lyon. The body was conducted towards Ghent with a degree of solemnity and order that seemed almost incompatible with the character of the insurgents. Intelligence of the melancholy occasion that had caused their sudden return had been already made known to the inhabitants of the city. All Ghent came out to meet the body, accompanied by a train of monks, singing, as they approached, a solemn dirge. The citizens, having advanced as far as the plain before the walls of their town, joined the funeral procession, and now retraced their steps to proceed to the interment of the

corpse, in the ancient church of St. Nicholas, which to this day stands in the corn-market of Ghent.

John Lyon, although he died poor, from having expended the whole of his substance in support of the cause he had so unhappily embraced, was yet magnificently interred, with ceremonies that would indeed have been more fitting the burial of a prince than that of a rebel.

The corpse, habited in the civil dress of the deceased, was placed upon a bier; but, in consequence of the shocking change which the manner of John Lyon's death had occasioned, his face was not exposed, according to the custom of the period; it was covered with a white linen cloth. The bier, supported by Peter du Bois, and five other principal leaders of his party, was carried into the city, followed by the numerous bands of White Hoods, armed and accoutred for war. Amongst them, nearly one thousand bore lighted torches, which they carried into the church of St. Nicholas. The interior of this sacred edifice was already brilliantly illuminated by thousands

of tapers that burnt at the altars of the different saints, and all the shrines were gorgeously set forth, glittering with their splendid decorations of jewels and massive gold.

The sword, the helmet, the armour of John Lyon, together with the banner of Ghent, were each severally placed upon the altar, and the war-horse of the deceased, richly caparisoned, was also led into the church, and there presented as an offering. As soon as these ceremonies were ended, the corpse of John Lyon was raised from the bier, wrapped in cerecloths, and placed within a leaden coffin prepared to receive it, where a portion of the pavement had been taken up for that purpose. The White Hoods pressed around the grave, anxious to cast a last look upon their leader.

The office for the dead was now commenced, the organ pealed its deep and solemn notes, whilst the monks and choristers chaunted the "Requiescat in pace," for the spirit of the departed. And not only in the church of St. Nicholas, but in every church and monastery throughout the city of Ghent, were masses

this day said for the repose of the soul of John Lyon.

After the ceremony of interment, the worthy Sir Simon de Bête received Anna into his own family with the tenderness and affection of a parent. Even Lady Judith was, for the present, somewhat softened in her manner towards the afflicted orphan, for Anna appeared so ill, that her ladyship thought it not at all unlikely her husband might soon be relieved of his charge. In this, however, she was mistaken, for the kindness, the attention, the unceasing care and watchfulness of Sir Simon, seconded by the poor girl's grateful efforts to compose her mind, that she might better acknowledge the goodness of her benefactor, produced so happy an effect, that at the end of a few weeks her health appeared gradually to improve, and at length was restored to her. The gentleness of her temper, the quiet submission of her manners, and her endeavours to become *useful* to the family in which she lived, in a very great degree reconciled the lady of Sir Simon to his adopted child; so that she no longer upbraided him (except on extraordi-

nary occasions) with having so adopted the girl without her own sanction. And there was also another cause that operated in Anna's favour, since Lady Judith now felt that, in the character of *protectress*, she had acquired a right to exercise over Anna the rule she was so fond of exerting, and that she could not easily find any one who would be so passive under the smart of her termagant humour. We must now leave Anna under the care of Sir Simon, whilst we direct our attention to the public affairs of Ghent.

After the death of John Lyon, the strength and the success of the White Hoods daily increased; so that, in a short time, their numbers were computed to be not less than one hundred thousand. The measures taken by the Earl of Flanders to oppose them were vigorous, although he could not muster a sufficient force soon enough to prevent their seizing upon the towns of Courtray, Grammont, Damme, Ypres, and others. The Earl had strongly garrisoned the town of Oudenarde, with many valiant knights and men-at-arms. These, headed by Sir Walter d'Anghien, nobly resisted the host of insurgents,

who had so completely surrounded the town, that all resources, excepting those within its walls, were cut off; and the White Hoods determined that if force could not avail, famine should at length compel them to surrender. Many and desperate were the sallies made by the besieged, and the attacks and repulses of the besiegers, till the stores of the former were so far reduced, that Lewis de Male saw, with serious apprehension, the probability that existed of his town of Oudenarde being forced to surrender, and, by doing so, to yield up to the fury of an incensed multitude all the noble and gallant knights within its walls. Lewis, therefore, was desirous to obtain peace on any terms, especially as the White Hoods had so far proceeded in their measures, that Du Bois, and one of his fellow captains John Prineaux, had actually made an attack upon Dendremonde, where the Earl himself was in garrison.

At this juncture, the talents of his mother, the Countess of Artois, proved of the utmost service, for she had so ably managed her intrigues with the French court, that, notwithstanding the dis-

pleasure into which Lewis had fallen with Charles the Fifth (who was still living), she prevailed with the Duke of Burgundy to come to Tournay, and there to institute measures to bring about a peace with the insurgents.

The Duke, on his arrival, sent the Abbot of St. Martin's to the chiefs of the White Hoods, who were engaged at the siege of Oudenarde, to induce them to come to treat for terms of peace.

The meeting was so far successful, that a hollow peace was for the present patched up, which at least had one good effect, that of freeing the knights and men-at-arms from their perilous situation in Oudenarde. The White Hoods had endeavoured to make it one of the conditions of the treaty, that the fortifications of Oudenarde should be dismantled, but to this the Duke of Burgundy would not assent; so that it was commonly said the peace would only afford the discontented party time to gather strength, by repose, for the renewal of the war.

The friends of the Earl of Flanders were now desirous that he should once more return to Ghent, and endeavour, by residing amongst the

citizens, to conciliate their affections. Lewis reluctantly consented to this proposal, though he made his public entry into Ghent with the utmost pomp and magnificence. Early on the morrow he left the palace in his way to the market-place, that he might address the people. As he passed along the streets, he observed that, notwithstanding the late treaty, men boldly walked abroad with the ensign of rebellion on their heads. The Earl, dismounting from his horse, went to the window of a house in the market-place prepared for his reception, and resolved to address the citizens with firmness and authority.

Lewis de Male possessed considerable powers of eloquence; and he now set forth to them, in the most lively manner, his love to his people, the victories he had gained for them, and the improvements which, under his auspices, had attended their commercial undertakings. He then touched feelingly upon the ungrateful manner in which such services had been requited, and concluded with a promise of pardon to all offenders, if, as a mark of their return to

loyalty and obedience, they would instantly remove from their heads what was so offensive to his sight.

The address was received with the utmost attention till the last allusion, when murmurs burst from every side; and Lewis descended from the apartment, highly incensed at such evident marks of obstinate disaffection. As he passed through the market-place on his return, the White Hoods looked sternly upon him, not deigning even to pull off their hoods, as a mark of respect to their prince. The Earl, seeing this disposition, would no longer trust himself with the citizens; so that in a few days he privately quitted Ghent for Lille.

Peter du Bois, and others, who wished for nothing but confusion, soon spread abroad the report, that the Earl had left his people in Ghent, by the advice of Gilbert Matthew, who was now employed with Lewis to devise means to oppress the citizens. Another circumstance also occurred to raise a feeling of general indignation. Sir Oliver d'Auterme, nephew of the murdered bailiff, having vowed to take vengeance

for his uncle's death upon the first men of Ghent who should fall in his way, chanced to observe some mariners descending the Scheld in boats laden with corn. Sir Oliver was near the shore, and, supported by a strong party, he seized upon these unfortunate men the instant they landed, put out their eyes, and sent them in this dreadful state to their fellow-citizens in Ghent.

Peter du Bois seized the opportunity thus offered to work upon the excited feelings of the people, and they instantly consented to renew the war, and to begin it by destroying the walls of Oudenarde, pillaging and burning the houses of all the nobility, wherever they came. Thus did the war again rage as fiercely as ever. The Earl of Flanders redoubled his activity, and called about him all his nobles, knights, and allies. Many were the victories which from time to time they achieved over the White Hoods, but more decisive measures were even yet necessary completely to subdue them.

The town of Bruges, which, it must be remembered, had been surprised by John Lyon

on the evening before his death, notwithstanding all Du Bois's attempts to hold it to his own interest, had once more declared for the Earl's party; so that a formidable civil strife at this time prevailed throughout all Flanders.

The nature of our narrative will not admit of a fuller detail of these circumstances, nor of the many and various successes of either party engaged in this unnatural war. At length the Earl of Flanders resolved to invest the city of Ghent on all sides, and to carry on such a vigorous siege, that famine should at last compel the inhabitants to submission. This was a work of difficulty, for the city was impregnable in its fortifications; well stored with wine and all necessary provisions; and indeed, notwithstanding the Earl, by his influence with neighbouring states, had induced them to forbid their people to carry stores into Ghent, yet the Dutch Brabanters and the Liegois continued, at a great hazard, to bring provisions up the Scheld in boats during the night, which they managed to smuggle into the city as occasion served.

Long and persevering was the siege, and almost daily did some fearful action take place without the walls of the town, or in the vain attempt to carry it by assault. Philip Von Artaveld, bold, brave, and daring, often headed a sally, or led a body of the White Hoods to attack their enemies even close to their own lines. And, on the part of the Earl, Sir Walter d'Anghien, who acted as marshal, repeatedly assaulted the town with a courage and resolution that was considered desperate even by his enemies. Sir Walter also frequently directed the operations of those machines which cast upon the city of Ghent immense stones, beams of wood, and missiles filled with gunpowder; the last named destructive instrument of warfare now being much in use, since it had been found so eminently serviceable at the battle of Crecy.

Gunpowder was also frequently thrown upon the besieged in hand-grenades, by which several houses were burnt to the ground; and, but for the utmost vigilance and caution, the whole city might have been reduced to ashes. The canals

of Ghent fortunately afforded a ready means to prevent a general conflagration.

At length the besiegers became so vigilant, that the persons who had hitherto smuggled provisions into Ghent now relaxed in their exertions, and rarely afforded help by conveying supplies, though they were paid tenfold the value of what they brought. It was now, therefore, generally understood that necessity was beginning to subdue the men of Ghent, who, the most warlike of any citizens in the Netherlands, would never yield merely to the power of the sword.

At this time the poor were indebted to Von Artaveld for saving them from dying of famine in the streets, as he instituted the most severe regulations, commanding that all persons within the walls of Ghent should share the stores it contained equally, and the poor at lower rates. The granaries of the monasteries and of the city he directed to be thrown open on the same terms; and wine was suffered to be drunk but once in a day, on penalty of a severe infliction

on the transgressor of the edict. These measures for a while kept misery at bay, and as yet the inhabitants might be said to suffer from a rigid abstinence, but not from actual famine.

The elder and less warlike part of the citizens wished for peace, and at length obtained leave of Von Artaveld to seek the Earl, by deputation, at Harlebeque (where he was holding a council), and there to endeavour to arrange honourable terms for the general good of each party. But as no truce was granted for this purpose, the deputation was obliged to leave Ghent *privately*, Sir Walter d'Anghien, with his accustomed generosity, having promised to wink at their passing through his lines.

Sir Simon de Bête and Sir Guisebert Groto headed this deputation, both actuated by a sincere desire to save their native city from ruin; though, it must be confessed, the former felt with some complacency all the share of consequence that would fall to his lot by becoming the head of an embassy of so much vital interest to Ghent. But not long after his departure on

this mission, the White Hoods, who had experienced how fruitless all such missions had hitherto proved, would not wait for the return of the present, but once more renewed their accustomed sallies on the besiegers.

In one of these sallies, a body of the White Hoods were surrounded by their enemies, and in danger of being cut off. The conflict was witnessed by the guard from one of the watch-towers of Ghent; and Philip Von Artaveld, learning the nature of it, immediately proceeded to the rescue of his people. Fierce and sanguine was the contest. The White Hoods shouting their war-cries of "Ghent! Ghent! Our Lady for Von Artaveld!" and the beseigers exclaiming, "Flanders for the Lion! Our Lady for D'Anghien!"

Sir Walter was this day personally engaged in the field, and, longing to combat with the chief of his opponents, he dashed the spur into his horse's sides, and imprudently, or rather madly, rode up into the very midst of the White Hoods, whilst his own men were kept at

bay by the enemy's vanguard. In this situation he was in a moment surrounded; a hundred swords were immediately raised, each eager to fell him to the earth, when Von Artaveld rushed up to his side, exclaiming in a voice of terror, "Touch him not, my masters; the first man amongst you who shall strike a blow at Sir Walter d'Anghien shall fall by my hand. Sir Walter shall not die by numbers, he shall have fair play!"

The manner, the voice, the authority of Von Artaveld, awed the rabble rout; no one offered to strike Sir Walter; and Philip, turning to him, said, "D'Anghien, of all our enemies with whom we wage war, you are the bravest, the noblest; yet you have the most injured our city, since by your means our houses are burnt, and our people reduced to necessity. You are the man with whom I have longed to combat; and, if it please God and the Saints, we will not part this day till one of us be a corpse!"

"I accept the challenge," said Sir Walter; "yet so generously have you saved me from

being overpowered by a mere rabble, that I am sorry my duty obliges me to defend myself against you."

"Prepare then," cried Von Artaveld; and with these words he fiercely attacked his opponent. The contest was fearful. Both were mounted. Their lances struck with such violence upon the helmets of each other, that fire flashed from them, and they were broken at the very onset. They now snatched their battle-axes that hung at the saddle-bow, and, with one blow, Von Artaveld struck the visor from Sir Walter's helmet. D'Anghien, grappling with his adversary to save himself from a second deadly blow, which was aimed at his head, came in such close contact with Von Artaveld, that they struggled with savage resolution, each reckless of himself, so he might destroy his enemy. In this manner (for neither would give the advantage to his adversary by losing his hold) they both fell from their horses and rolled upon the ground; whilst Philip's people stood looking on to witness the single combat of these cham-

pions, as if they had been spectators at the sports of a tournament.

Sir Walter, bleeding and nearly blinded (for the axe had wounded him in the forehead, so that the blood had flowed over his eyes), started up from the earth, threw down his axe, and drew his sword. Von Artaveld did the same; he would use the same weapon, for he disdained but to be on equal terms with his opponent; and before he again commenced the attack, he cried aloud, "Yield thee, Sir Walter, yield!"

"Never, never!" answered D'Anghien; "This for the Lion!" and grasping his sword, whilst he raised his shield to guard his head, he sprang forward, and once more closed in with his adversary. Again the struggle was desperate, but it was now unequal, for Sir Walter, actually rendered blind at the moment by the quantity of blood which flowed down his face, was easily disarmed and vanquished; he fell with a heavy groan upon the earth. Von Artaveld immediately set his foot upon

the breast of his fallen adversary, and, holding the point of his sword to his throat, he cried aloud, "Yield thee, Sir Walter, or die!"

"Never," again answered D'Anghien: "strike, and end my shame."

"Kill him, kill him!" exclaimed the White Hoods, with one accord.

"No," said Von Artaveld, "I will not take thy life, for thou art the bravest foe I ever vanquished. Secure Sir Walter," he continued, addressing his people. "Carry him instantly within the town, and to my dwelling. But see that you let no man know who is my prisoner, till I shall make it public. I must first communicate the capture of this gallant foe to the council: it will be joyful news indeed. This is a triumph shall rend the very soul of Lewis."

Sir Walter, who had fainted from the loss of blood, was removed, whilst senseless, to the house of Von Artaveld, in the manner that had been directed by that chief, who, after giving orders that every attention humanity could offer should be paid him, pointed out a strong room

as the place of his security, and went himself to make the council acquainted with the important capture of that day's sally beyond the walls of Ghent.

CHAP. VIII.

We now must mention a few circumstances that occurred previous to the capture of Sir Walter d'Anghien, as they are connected with events that we must shortly detail respecting him. It has already been stated, that a few days after Sir Simon de Bête and his fellow-citizens had quitted Ghent on their embassy to the Earl, no truce having been granted, the besiegers continued, as usual, to annoy the town. Unfortunately, during one of their attacks by those machines that did so much mischief, a house adjoining to that of Sir Simon was set on fire, and before the flames could be extinguished, the habitation of the worthy goldsmith became so seriously injured (though it was saved from being burnt down), that neither his wife the Lady Judith, nor Anna, could possibly remain in it till Sir Simon's return.

Philip Von Artaveld, who really regarded the honest citizen, took compassion upon his wife, and now proposed that both the Lady Judith and Anna should make their abode in his house during the absence of their natural protector, especially as the former was so much hurt by a piece of burning timber that had fallen upon her, whilst she was endeavouring to save a casket of jewels ere she quitted her house. The horror that Lady Judith felt at the idea of being lodged in a house where Philip Von Artaveld (whose morals were by no means on a par with his courage) was known to live with Bianca as his mistress, gave way to dire necessity, since, in fact, she knew not where else to go for safety. War, famine, and confusion every day threatened Ghent with their worst consequences. And many of Lady Judith's female friends and gossips, who had been glad enough to share in the festivities and plenty of her house in prosperous days, although they now condoled with her, and deplored her calamity, yet they did not suffer their pity to extend so far as at all to inconvenience themselves. No one but Philip

Von Artaveld offered her a shelter when thus driven from her house, though a shelter had become absolutely necessary, for Lady Judith was so much hurt by the burning timber, that, after her removal, she was confined for many weeks to her chamber.

The female friends above named, as compassionate souls as ever loved to gossip over the business and calamities of their acquaintance, mingled with their pity certain good-natured, and, no doubt, very just, remarks on the misfortunes of the Lady Judith; such as, "Pride would always one day have a fall;" and that "scolding people ought to be one day taught to know themselves by suffering;" and that "if some people expected other people to feel for them, they ought to learn to govern their tongues, before they are forced to use them to cry out with complaints;" and yet, "after all, it was a great pity the *house* had suffered, for there was not a better in Ghent; and how could Sir Simon afford to repair it, when he must have thrown away so much money in keeping open house to his friends." Whilst half the prudent

wives of Ghent amused themselves with these gossipings over their unfortunate associate's calamity, Anna alone attended her sick bed with the utmost patience, tenderness, and humanity. Anna, too, acted the part of leech, and by no means that of an unskilful one.

At the period of our history, young ladies were generally instructed in the knowledge of herbs and drugs needful in sickness; a knowledge that often rendered them useful to their friends, and particularly to the poor, and, indeed, sometimes to the sick of a very different description, since in days of chivalry it was no uncommon circumstance for a wounded knight to have some fair damsel to attend him as his doctor. Anna's skill had been encouraged, and not a little cultivated, by her aunt, whilst she lived with her in the woods near St. Omer's, so that her practice amongst the peasantry had been always prompt and kind, and often successful.

Occupied with the Lady Judith in her sick room, she saw little of her haughty enemy and jealous rival Bianca, who, now that Anna was so far removed from the Earl, though she still che-

rished her hatred for her, saw no necessity for any immediate act of hostility towards her, and as she had been brought to the house by the compassionate order of Von Artaveld, she dared not openly insult her in direct opposition to his conduct. Bianca, therefore, contented herself with treating Anna, when she chanced to meet her, with a cold and distant civility, and the orphan was glad to avoid the presence of the Italian, by keeping constantly near the suffering wife of her benefactor.

Some days had passed in this manner, when Anna, who had been busied in preparing a medicine for her patient, as she was crossing the hall of Von Artavald's house to return to her chamber, heard a noise which was occasioned by the entrance of several of the White Hoods, who brought with them a wounded prisoner. The bustle of the moment induced her to retire within a deep recess of one of the windows at the extremity of the apartment, whence she could both see and hear all that passed.

"Here Martin," said one of the White Hoods to his fellow, "stir quickly, go and bring

the keys of the strong room, there we are to secure our prisoner. But stay, before you go, fetch some water, we must wash the blood off his face, or he will scarce be able to breathe much longer, and we are charged to take care of him. By the faith of a true man, he is as brave as a devil, and if I had my will I would have sent his soul to sing vespers with the evil one, rather than have spared him to cut our throats hereafter. But Von Artaveld is always for saving a knocked-down man, and for cheating the fiends of their due."

"Come, come," replied Martin, "learn a little mercy, Master Oxhead, you may one day need it yourself. I will fetch the water, and then take the charge of the prisoner; for you are not very likely to be so tender of his life as you ought to be. Von Artaveld charged us to use care."

"Well then," answered Oxhead, "take the jail bird, if you will, into your own keeping, but he will sing a devil's note if he once fly the cage."

The water was brought; the blood washed from off the prisoner's face; he shewed signs of returning life. Martin had finished his services,

and, no longer hanging over him, rose up, when Anna, who now beheld the face of the wounded man, uttered a faint cry, and sunk upon the ground. Martin heard her cry, and, leaving the prisoner to his companions, ran to her, supported her in his arms, and, in his readiness to do a good act, threw some of the water, stained with the blood of Sir Walter d'Anghien, upon her face.

Anna revived, looked round, but the prisoner was gone, he had been removed to the strong room by the White Hoods, whilst Martin was engaged in assisting her. Her eye now caught the sight of her own scarf, stained by what had been so heedlessly thrown upon her to restore animation. She shuddered and uttered an involuntary exclamation of horror. "Aye," said Martin, "I knew it was the sight of the blood about the man that made you swoon. Young damsels are not used to such sights; they will be nothing when you are accustomed to them. But I did not know, Mistress Anna, you were here, or——"

"Tell me," said Anna, endeavouring to compose herself, "who is that prisoner?"

"Sir Walter d'Anghien, lady," replied Martin; "but I forgot," he added immediately; "I was charged not to say so to any one, but you will not betray me."

Anna assured him she would not, and that he had nothing to fear from her. He then told her all the particulars with which the reader is already acquainted, and, soon after quitting her, went to take charge of the prisoner. Sir Walter had recovered the use of his senses; his wound was dressed, nor did it appear dangerous — indeed he had fainted more from the loss of blood than from any other cause. Martin attended him during the day with the utmost care, and shewed a kindness of heart towards the captive seldom found amongst the White Hoods.

It was towards the evening, when the sun had just sunk into the west, and still left lingering upon the horizon a deep and red glow of light, that appeared more conspicuous by contrast with the melancholy twilight, when Martin opened the door of the strong room, and asking his prisoner how he fared, placed a lighted lamp upon the table before him. The prisoner said he felt but

little pain from the wound; that he thought nothing of it, but much of his captivity; and thanked Martin for the humane attention he had shewn, and the care he had taken to render all necessary assistance. Soon afterwards the man retired, saying that he should be posted as sentinel without the door till midnight, and thus be within call, should Sir Walter need any thing that he could procure for him.

Martin was really a good-natured fellow; he had become a White Hood because his master was such, but he was neither brutal nor ferocious; and he respected the brave young knight who was now under his charge by the chance, or, as the French call it, the fortunes of war. Whilst Martin paced up and down the gallery on guard, he heard a light step advancing towards him, and in a few minutes Anna approached, laid her hand gently upon his arm, and softly whispered, "Martin, do you fear God?"

"Why, yes, lady," said Martin, "I hope I do in an honest way; that is, I fight whenever I am ordered out on duty, and never desert my post."

"Aye," replied Anna; "but — but it is not that I mean. Do you believe that he has taught you to be merciful, and to feel pity for the fallen?"

"I hope so, lady," again answered Martin; "I always try to put a fallen man out of his pain, by running my sword through him, or knocking him on the head, and if that is not shewing mercy, I don't know what is."

"But," said Anna, hesitating, for, unused as she was to act upon the feelings of the lower orders, she scarcely knew how to address him, "but would you do to another as you would they should do to you, if you were in misery?"

"That I would, lady," answered the man, "or else I see little good in being born and bred a Christian."

"Then," said Anna, "Christianity teaches mercy to the wretched."

"It does, it does," replied Martin.

"Shew it then to me," said the beautiful girl, as she seized the rough hand of the honest soldier, "for I am most unhappy."

Martin looked at her, and pointed to the door,

and smiling archly, but not rudely, he said, "Aye, lady, I see your drift; you would look in upon my prisoner, and I know you have skill in leech-craft; well, I will ask no questions, and you cannot help the wounded man to escape whilst I keep the key, and so I'll never mar a *true love business*, although it were at the foot of the gallows, for yon prisoner, I reckon, is not far off it. So go your ways, speak softly, and stay but half an hour, for fear Von Artaveld should return; and in the mean time I will whistle, and know nothing about the matter."

The good-natured Martin then softly opened the door of the strong room, pushed Anna in quickly, and double-locked the door. Anna had accomplished her purpose; but such were her emotions when she found herself alone in the chamber with the prisoner, that she had no power to speak; she sunk, with her hands pressed before her eyes, against the wall of the apartment. The prisoner started, "Gracious Heaven!" he exclaimed, as he looked up, "Anna!"

"Oh! Henry," said she, "is it thus we meet; and are you really Sir Walter d'Anghien?"

"I am yours, the same as ever," replied Sir Walter, "and never did I deceive you but for your own safety. As nephew to the Earl of Flanders, had it been known that I was attached to you, your ruin and my own must have followed, for I am still in my minority, still a ward to the Earl. I waited but till I should become my own master, so that I might claim you as mine, and wed you without danger. For this purpose I assumed another name when I first knew you, for I feared to trust your family with a secret that, if discovered, might have endangered even our lives."

"To you I owe my life," said Anna; "you saved me from the dreadful cup which destroyed my father; and in now seeking you in the hour of your necessity, I do but an act of gratitude that I would pay to the lowest of mankind."

"And must I think it nothing more?" replied Sir Walter. "Oh, Anna, if the knowledge that I am better born than the poor student of St. Omer's, to whom you gave your heart in early life, can

so change your affection, I would rather have died as Henry de Cassel, than have lived the Lord of Anghien."

"I am not changed," said Anna; "but I will never take advantage of your affection for me, to bring you to disgrace and ruin. Forget the past; you are so far above me, that I should be unfit to share your fortunes. Let me remember you as my benefactor; and let me feel through after life, that I have done one good deed for my preserver: — I came to save you."

"Anna," said Sir Walter, "whilst I have life, I will not resign my hope one day to call you mine. I have no power to forget you, even if I would. You are the dearest thing to me on earth: life would be a blank to me without you — a melancholy desert, where my heart would vainly look for comfort."

"Speak not thus," answered Anna; "but hear me. Oh, Henry, I cannot disguise my feelings; terror has brought me to you. I have lately learnt such dreadful tidings, that unless you follow my council, you will leave me in this world, but to mourn your early fate."

"What is it you mean?" eagerly enquired Sir Walter.

"I will be brief," said Anna. "Von Artaveld is noble. I have learnt, since you came here, that he merely designed to keep you a close prisoner, but to do no injury to your life. Unhappily, your *own* people, thinking you were slain, have taken a dreadful vengeance, by murdering some of the White Hoods they held as *prisoners*. In consequence of *this*, Peter du Bois and Arnold le Clerc have so worked upon the minds of the council of Ghent, that they have resolved upon your death — unless — "

"Unless what? Speak, I conjure you," said Sir Walter.

"Unless," replied Anna, "you will swear to return to your own people, only to withdraw them from our city walls, and never again to bear arms for the Earl of Flanders."

"I do this!" exclaimed D' Anghien; "No, not if I had a thousand lives to save, would I thus at once become a coward and a traitor. I will meet death, since there is no other way; but I will not stoop to perjury and dishonour."

These last words, Sir Walter pronounced in a tone so calm, yet so decisive, that Anna, whose feelings were of the most ardent nature, was overcome by their influence. The pain she felt was rendered doubly acute by the vigour of her lively imagination. She saw at this moment nothing but the terrific image which the impending fate of Sir Walter placed before her eyes. She forgot all her self-command, and burst into tears. Her feelings might be compared to a torrent, which, broken loose from its confines, gathers strength as it flows, and carries away, by the force of its current, every barrier placed to check its fury.

"Oh, do not say so," exclaimed the unhappy girl; "think, think again, and save yourself from death."

"I cannot," replied Sir Walter, "Leave me, Anna, I beseech you — do not —"

"No, I will never leave you," said Anna; "here I will plead to you till I sink at your feet. I will implore you to have pity on yourself."

"I must not, I will not betray my country, nor my prince," answered Sir Walter.

"No; you will save both," exclaimed Anna. "Ghent is of your country. Think of our citizens. — think how you have reduced us. Famine is within our walls. Death, a cruel and a lingering death awaits the wretched inmates of this city. Spare us, and in doing this deed of mercy you will save yourself. Withdraw your people but from our walls, and all shall be well."

"I cannot, Anna," said D'Anghien; "I cannot betray my honour."

"There is no honour in civil strife," replied Anna, "where man, who should respect the charities of life, preys on his brother; where fathers war against their sons, and the children cover the silver hairs of their age with shame and death. Can you, then, war against your fellow citizens? Withdraw your people. Do this deed, and you will save a city. Think how many prayers will rise to Heaven; and when mothers look on their babes, and watch their helpless state of infancy, they shall bless you, you that have saved them from the sorrows of the widowed and the fatherless."

" Anna," said Sir Walter, " in mercy to my feelings do not tempt me to do an act that might hereafter make me think that she, whom I love dear as my own soul, led me to shame, to guilt, to treason, and all to save a worthless life like mine."

" No, not to save you alone," replied Anna. " If the misery of Ghent cannot awaken pity in your heart, think but of me. Think of the wretched girl whose affections you won in early life by the fondest vows of faith and love; and can you, will you, cast her off to misery and want? — Think what will be her sufferings when she hears the last bell sound the death note of the criminal; when she sees you dragged to the fatal spot, to perish like a common wretch the law condemns. And oh, think, if she can outlive that hour, that you leave her to the fury of the victor, or else to die by lingering torments from famine in our streets. If you have no mercy on yourself, yet save me."

" Anna, I conjure you, leave me," said D'Anghien; " quit the hold of my mantle. Do not look thus up in my face, I cannot, I can-

not bear it." Sir Walter burst into a flood of tears, and falling into a chair near the table, he rested his arms upon it, and covered his face with his hands. At this moment the door was suddenly opened, and Martin rushed in with a countenance that expressed the utmost alarm. "Leave the chamber," he exclaimed, "leave it this moment; some one has entered the gallery, and is even now coming hither. If you are discovered here, lady, my life may pay the forfeit, so away, no tarrying, no more words;" and as he finished this hasty address, Martin caught Anna by the arm and hurried her from the apartment before she could even bid adieu to the unfortunate captive. But ere Martin had accomplished his purpose of locking the door on the outside, Bianca, the Italian, with haste in her steps and anger in her eye, came up the gallery, and without speaking one word to the terrified sentinel, who looked aghast with dismay, she bid Anna follow her, in a tone of voice so imperative, that the orphan obeyed almost mechanically, whilst the state of her feelings, and her recent agitation, rendered her incapa-

ble even of forming a conjecture as to the purpose of Bianca in this command.

The Italian led the way to her own chamber, closed the door, and turning to Anna, fixed upon her countenance a look so penetrating, yet so stern, that the poor girl seemed to shrink before her gaze.

"You are the daughter of my ancient enemy," said Bianca; "but you bear a character for unalterable truth. Fear nothing then; but speak the truth to me, and perhaps at this moment I may do that for you which not all Ghent besides could accomplish."

Anna attempted to reply, but her agitation was so great, she could not frame a connected answer. "I know you have visited the prisoner," continued Bianca. "Tell me, are you beloved by Sir Walter D'Anghien, and is he the master of your affections?"

Anna again assayed to speak, whilst Bianca again fixed upon her another look of that penetrating kind which rendered her still more confused. She blushed deeply. Artless by nature, surprised, and wholly unprepared for Bianca's

enquiries, she replied, as the tears burst from her eyes—"Indeed, when I first became acquainted with Sir Walter, I did not know his birth — I did not think him above my own degree, and he gained my affections whilst he gave me his own."

"It is enough," said Bianca; "your looks prove the truth of your words. You did not then seek to win the heart of the Earl of Flanders; yet why did you listen to Lewis de Male?"

"In the hope to save my father's life," replied Anna. "The Earl granted me his pardon."

"I see it all," said Bianca. "You are innocent; at least you did not conspire to ruin me in the affections of Lewis; yet you know too well I was discarded for your sake. But you shall help my revenge. May you live to be the wife of Sir Walter D'Anghien — I cannot inflict a greater punishment on Lewis, for he will then know the pangs of jealousy, the torments of slighted affection, the envy of a rival's happiness. Hear me, Anna, and I will assist you. Sir Walter d'Anghien is destined to die on the morrow.

Von Artaveld has vainly endeavoured to save his life. There is but one way to save him. Sir Simon de Bête is returned, and in the absence of Von Artaveld, he will have the command over the prisoner. You must induce him to set D'Anghien at liberty, and I will furnish him with the apparel of a serving varlet, so that Sir Walter may be completely disguised. In this manner he may pass out of the city before the morning, in company with some of those people from Brabant, who, at the risk of their lives, have stolen within our walls to bring us some supplies in our time of want. A plan is formed to secure their retreat down the Scheldt. Sir Walter, if he joins them, may soon be in safety, and his presence will secure these people from any interruption from the Earl's party."

It would be needless to tell the reader with how much joy, with how many thanks, Anna acceded to this proposal, and without farther delay she enquired for Sir Simon. Having learnt where he was, she staid in the anti-room of his apartment, in order to secure an audience with him as soon as he should quit the chamber

of the Lady Judith, where he now was; the honest Knight having hastened to pay his respects to his wife after his return to Ghent, from whom he also learnt all particulars concerning the destruction of his house by fire. But this interview requires another chapter.

CHAP. IX.

Of all the feelings that actuate the human mind there is none of a more obstinate character than that of curiosity, since most other violent passions may in time wear themselves out, or become satiated by full indulgence; but curiosity never has enough, and as its field is boundless, so are its desires. When this passion is turned to its proper object, the acquirement of knowledge for the benefit of others or of ourselves, it is both a laudable and a generous feeling. But that restless spirit of enquiry which proceeds from no other motive but that of malice, idleness, or impertinence, is at once a mean and injurious quality, the consequence of ignorance, and the sure note of a little mind.

Sir Simon de Bête was at this moment suffering from the misery of such a temper in the person of his wife, who, after detailing all her troubles, enquired slightly the purpose and the

consequence of the good knight's deputation to the Earl. Lady Judith cared so little about public matters, that, but for her own personal sufferings, the welfare or the downfall of Ghent would not have deeply interested her. Any answer therefore would have satisfied her question, excepting that which the worthy Sir Simon was unfortunate enough to give her; for Sir Simon had said the result of the deputation to the Earl was — *a secret.*

No sooner had his helpmate heard this, than her curiosity became strongly excited; and all her indifference was changed into a warm feeling to follow up the pursuit. Like an old hunter, that has lazily been pacing along the road with perfect indifference, but, upon suddenly hearing the cry of the hounds, pricks up his ears, snorts, and tears off full gallop after the chace, even so Lady Judith had no sooner heard the word *secret* than off she went to follow up the game: question came upon question, so that it was impossible for the poor goldsmith to give to each of these a reply.

"Dame," said Sir Simon, in answer to her

tormenting importunities, "it is of no use to ask me, since I am charged by the Earl of Flanders, upon no consideration to make known the terms upon which he will grant us peace, until I state them to the council, who are to be called together on purpose to hear his pleasure."

"That may be all very well," replied his wife; "but what can the terms be that must not be told till the council meet? They must be very strange, and I should like to know them."

"The affair is a secret, wife," said Sir Simon, "so no more about it."

"Well then, I'll say no more than this," continued Lady Judith, "that it will be no secret when it is told to a whole council of citizens, who are most of them married men. And there could be no harm in telling it to a poor woman sick in her bed, and I shall not sleep for the night for thinking about it. And you might tell it to me, your own wife, if you had any pity for me, and I suffering too as I suffer. But you have no more heart than a brute, Sir Simon, no heart at all."

This was said in a tone between whimpering

and scolding. Sir Simon attempted to vindicate his pretensions to possessing so essential an organ of the human creature as that of a heart; but his wife flew at him again, something like a cat, which, after having eyed and chased a poor mouse till she has it in a corner, suddenly darts upon her prey and growls exultingly over her victim whilst she makes it suffer the divers tortures both of her mouth and paws.

Sir Simon could not resist the torrent that burst upon him, and thinking perhaps there was no great danger that a woman who was confined to her bed could do much mischief by communicating the secret, was imprudent enough to tell her, with many charges of secresy, that the Earl of Flanders would grant a peace to Ghent on condition that two hundred of the White Hoods, to be named by him, should be given up to him in order to be banished into other countries, as he might please to direct, and thus, by the absence of the most daring spirits, tranquillity might be secured at home. But fearing lest a vague report should misrepresent his intentions, it was resolved that this proposal

should be kept secret till it was communicated in the council.

Such was Sir Simon's intelligence, which, pent up and confined within the bosom of his wife, there burnt and smothered like a hidden flame for lack of vent to spread itself into a blaze through the channel of a communicative tongue. Now it so chanced that a couple of female friends called in that evening, to enquire after Lady Judith's hurts and bruises received during the late fire, to taste a cup of her mulled wine, (for the solace of tea-drinking, that social bond of gossips, was in these days unknown in Europe,) and likewise to prescribe for the invalid divers decoctions of herbs, which were to be applied to the wounds, or bruises, with a damp scarlet cloth, assisted by certain prayers to be said backwards during the application of them.

" So, my lady," said one of the friends, " Sir Simon's come back from the deputation ; but nobody knows what he has done, for nobody is good enough, they say, to be trusted with the secret."

" Indeed !" answered Lady Judith, " then

they say a great deal more than they know. There are some persons Sir Simon thinks worthy of knowing his secrets, aye, and consulting with them about them too, as he ought to do."

"Bless me who can they be," said one gossip.

"I should like to know," cried the other.

"Why, who should they be," answered Lady Judith, "but Sir Simon's own wife, the most proper person, I think, to know a man's affairs?"

"And you know all about it, then?" said the one.

"And what can be the secret?" cried the other.

"It is no common secret, dames, I can assure you," replied Lady Judith, with a very significant look. "It is only worth as many as three hundred lives in Ghent."

"Three hundred lives in Ghent!" echoed the first friend. "And what is to be done with them?" asked the other.

"I could tell you more than you could dream of, dames," said Lady Judith, "aye, and more than any leader or burgomaster of them all in

this town yet knows, except Sir Simon and myself. That is, I *could* tell you, if a prudent friend or two might be trusted and would hold their tongues."

"It shall never be known from me," said gossip No. 1. — "It shall never pass my lips," exclaimed No. 2.

"Why, then," said Lady Judith, "it is very shocking to be sure to think upon, and more shocking to tell, that the Earl will only grant peace to Ghent upon condition that three hundred of the leaders of the White Hoods are to be given up to him. And you know, dames, it is easy to guess at what will follow; for the Earl will certainly have them all hanged before his eyes."

The gossips turned up their hands and eyes, finished their cups of mulled wine, applied in all haste the herbs recommended to LadyJudith's wounds, but did *not* stay to say the prayers backwards; and pinning close their wimples, and drawing on their hoods, they set off as fast as they could to spread the secret throughout all Ghent; so that long before the unfortunate Sir

Simon could summon the meeting of the council in the great hall, it was currently reported and believed throughout the city, that he had consented to give up to the Earl of Flanders all the leaders of his party, and four hundred of the White Hoods, who were to be hanged without mercy.

Whilst Lady Judith and the gossips were thus conversing together, on the evening of Sir Simon's return, Anna, who had sought that knight after his interview with his wife, was very differently engaged in holding her conference with her benefactor. The worthy goldsmith expressed his sincere delight at seeing her again, kissed her forehead, patted her upon the head, and gave her a pinch or two upon the cheek, just as he would have done to a little child of five years old, and bid her continue to be a good girl, and God would bless her, and he would be her friend the longest day he had to live.

"Dear Sir Simon," said Anna, "I know you are ever the friend of the distressed, and it is on that account I now speak to you. I have a sad tale to tell, and so little time for the relation,

that you must forgive me, if I am more abrupt, and less observant than I ought to be."

"There, my dear child," replied Sir Simon; "take my purse, and I will consider your tale as told already. I know the distress of Ghent; some poor creature who has not even a brass coin would beg an alms."

"No, sir," replied Anna, "I have no want of money for that or any other purpose, thanks to your bounty. The distress of which I speak is connected with the unfortunate young prince who, in the absence of Von Artaveld, is *your* prisoner.

"What, Sir Walter d'Anghien!" exclaimed Sir Simon. "Alas, my dear child, how can I aid a man, whom, I grieve while I say it, the council of the White Hoods has condemned to die. And if all I have heard be true, he but too justly deserves it. Yet I am sorry for it, notwithstanding Sir Walter directed the bombarders that have destroyed my house; and though I say it, there was not a better nor a handsomer in Ghent, and one fit for a knight, master of the goldsmiths' company, and——"

"Oh sir," said Anna, interrupting him, as she burst into tears, "if you have any pity and regard for — for me, preserve this unhappy man. Sir Walter d'Anghien and the masker who saved me from death at Bruges are the same."

"Who saved thee, my child!" said Sir Simon; "I wish you had not told me so, — I wish I was not his keeper." And Sir Simon as he spoke turned peevishly away.

"Say not so, my dear father," cried Anna, "(for you know you love to have me call you father,) but rather rejoice that you, by being his keeper, have the means to save a brave man from death, and me from misery."

Sir Simon shuffled his hands into his pockets, walked a turn or two about the room, then suddenly stopt, and looked at Anna. Her countenance spoke more than her words, and her guardian, throwing his arms about her, said, "Do not look so, I cannot bear it; I know I have promised to be your father, and fathers should try to make their children happy. What is it you would have me do?"

Anna took him gently by the hand, and softly

said, "I would that you would suffer me to do for him the same good act he did at Bruges, to save a human creature from a cruel death, — give him liberty."

"Holy Mary!" said Sir Simon, "do you know what you ask? — my life perhaps may be endangered if I grant your request; but Sir Walter is brave, though a foe; he saved thee, my child, and that act must not be forgotten, for thy life is worth a hundred such old lives as mine, — and I do love you, Anna — upon my soul," continued Sir Simon, as he wiped his eyes with the back of his hand. "I believe I could rather die than see you look again as you did just now; and though Sir Walter did burn my house, yet I am not a man to resent injury, when I can do better by forgiving it."

Anna threw her arms round his neck, as if he had really been her father, whilst Sir Simon, as if afraid to think upon what he was doing, and yet eager to make her happy, hastily removed her from him, and saying he could not stay, but ought that night to give orders for the meeting of the citizens, he endeavoured to escape towards the door.

"But what must be done?" said Anna; "he must be freed to-night, or to-morrow it will be too late."

"You are a little fool," replied Sir Simon peevishly; "why will you ask me such dangerous questions? Walls, they say, have ears — there — cannot you see, I have gone out in such a hurry, upon my duty, that I have forgot myself, and have left the keys of the strong room behind me? Martin is the guard, and must not Martin have time to take food, or to take a nap, though he be a watch, if I should order him for a short time to leave his post? Ask me no more questions."

Sir Simon left the house, Anna had the keys, and she flew rather than walked to carry them to Bianca, since, without her assistance she could do nothing. The proud Italian loved to exercise her authority, and to torment even those she served. She now ordered Anna to her own chamber, and bid her not stir thence, till she called her. Anna was obliged to obey, and after waiting in an agony of suspence, Bianca at length arrived, and gave her the joy-

ful news, that Sir Walter d'Anghien had escaped with the men who had secretly brought a supply of corn into Ghent, and that in all probability he was by that time safe without the city walls.

CHAP. X.

DURING the same night on which Sir Walter d'Anghien had been suffered to escape from Ghent, Arnoul le Clerc, with Peter le Nuitée and other of the White Hoods, had assembled together, as they frequently did, in order to keep their midnight vigils, whilst they planned exploits for the purposes of violence, or pondered mischievous intrigues. On the present occasion they had so long been thus engaged, that the morning light dawned in the east, ere the lamp that served their midnight orgies was extinguished.

There is nothing which gives to human beings a more ghastly and unprepossessing appearance than the light of day bursting in upon them after a carouse; when, as revellers, they have, Comus like, enjoyed the night as the season for mirth and minstrelsy, rather than for that of repose. It is unfavourable even to youth and

innocence; what must it be then to vice and intemperance.

The light of day, which now stole in through the high-latticed windows of the house of Arnoul le Clerc, made the feeble flame of the expiring lamp look but as a dying ember, overpowered by the soft but clear beams of the "sweet hour of prime." It shewed the countenances of the insurgents haggard from want of rest, reeking and unwashed, whilst the unsteady motion of their limbs, a stupid gaze about the eye, and a flushed cheek, declared many of them to be still under the influence of their recent debauch.

Thus were they sitting in an apartment, where all seemed disorder: empty flagons, stools overturned, fragments of bread and bones (so picked that nothing was left to tempt a starved cat that strayed about this house of iniquity,) were seen scattered all around. At length the party was disturbed by the sudden appearance of Peter du Bois, who was quite in his sober senses. The first thing he did, was to reprove the inebriety which he could not but perceive in some among them; and that too at a time when

Ghent was threatened with approaching famine. "What, my masters," said Du Bois, "is this a season for revelling, when want is within our very gates? and do you thus waste in a midnight debauch the very things, for the need of which you may hereafter perish? But I have news for you — news that will rouse you, if nothing else can. Who is there among you that will be the first to bid the Earl of Flanders hang him up by the neck as he would an old dog whose teeth can no longer bite?"

"What do you mean, Peter," said Arnoul le Clerc, "about hanging and the Earl of Flanders? If the plan I have in my head succeeds, and we but get in a fresh stock of corn for the city, the Earl of Flanders may hang himself in his own garters if he will, for we will play the devil yet amongst his people."

"You will something doubt that when you hear what I have to tell you," replied Du Bois, "that is, unless you will follow my advice, and act boldly at once, as it becomes men to do who are made desperate by necessity."

All the White Hoods who were present now

pressed round Du Bois, eager to gain the intelligence. "Von Artaveld," said Peter, "has made a bold sally, in order to attempt to subdue a neighbouring castle, where there is hope of getting some supplies for our miserable citizens. He has succeeded in passing the besieger's lines, so we must not look for his return for some days, to help us through our danger. We must act for ourselves."

"What is this danger?" enquired Arnoul le Clerc, impatiently.

"Nothing less," said Peter, "than that we are betrayed by that old rascal Sir Simon de Bête. I have just learnt that he has agreed to enter into a treaty with the Earl of Flanders, to throw open to him the gates of Ghent, and to give us leaders all up, with four hundred of our people, to be hanged upon our own walls."

"It shall never be — we will kill Sir Simon, we will be revenged, we will stab him, hang him up alive, we will raise the White Hoods to crush him." These and many other such expressions burst at once from the lips of the party.

"Stay, my masters," said Peter, "you are

too hasty — you have not yet heard a still stronger proof of our having been purposely betrayed by Sir Simon de Bête. Von Artaveld left his prisoner, Sir Walter d'Anghien, in the keeping of Sir Simon, and but this night he has suffered him to escape."

"Let us instantly revenge ourselves; we will tear Sir Simon limb by limb. I will be the first to strike my dagger into his heart," exclaimed Arnoul le Clerc.

"And I mine," cried one of the White Hoods.

"And I too mine," echoed another.

Peter again proceeded, — "Follow my counsel, and we shall have no more such disgraceful negotiations. It would be useless to destroy one traitor, unless we could strike terror into all the rest; for Sir Simon has induced Sir Guisebert Grote to join in this infamous treaty. Do you, my masters, collect the most hardy and determined amongst you. Go armed, and quietly take your places as leaders of the White Hoods at the council. I and Arnoul le Clerc will contrive to enter the room just as Sir Simon is about to make known the infamous terms he

would propose. We will then cry treason; do you instantly secure the doors, and stab to the heart both Sir Simon and Sir Guisebert before they can ask mercy. I will then shew their deeds to the council, and that Sir Simon deserved death if it were only for having freed our greatest enemy, d'Anghien."

This plan was universally applauded, and some sober, others half drunk, sallied forth to arouse their fellows. Peter Du Bois and Arnoul le Clerc alone remained behind in the apartment.

"And pray, Peter," said Arnoul, "how long am I to play the part of bear, and you of master? How long am I to follow you, as if I were chained and muzzled, and am to rise up and dance when you please to bid me, by raising the rod of oppression. How long am I to do this, I say, ere you choose to bestow upon me the promised reward?"

"You are a fool, Arnoul," answered Peter. "Do you not see that by knocking out the brains of this old Sir Simon, if he have any brains, I at once step in, and claim the guardianship of

my pretty cousin, as her nearest relative? If you comply with my conditions, you may have her as soon as you please."

"Have I not complied with all your conditions already?" said Arnoul le Clerc. "Did I not tell Von Artaveld, (aye, and swore to it too,) that it was my people, and not yourself, who proposed to murder the bailiff? — Have not I taken upon me all the dirty work to screen you? If there is a throat to be cut, or a church to be robbed, who does it? Arnoul le Clerc; — and who wins by it? Peter Du Bois. — If a plot is to be carried on, or a lie to be told, who takes the hazard, and invents the falshood? why Arnoul le Clerc; — and who is at the bottom of it all? Peter du Bois. — And now, who is to seem the proposer of your mad scheme about the abbey? why again, Arnoul le Clerc — and all for what? just to have leave to lay hold of a pretty wench to whom I have a fancy, and all must forsooth be done by *your* good will, and toil must pay it, because *she* happens to be your kinswoman."

" You grow insolent, master Arnoul le Clerc," said Du Bois; " but hark ye, if Peter du Bois should choose just to keep his cousin to himself, instead of making her the payment of your wages, how will you obtain her, think you? But remember, should you do all I wish, I give Anna to you like an honest man; you are to marry the girl, or my sword shall show you I have a value for the honour of my own blood."

" Aye, aye," replied Arnold, " let it be so; the priest may mumble, and I will say Amen to it, and so pretty Anna becomes the wife of a White Hood, and all is settled."

" Stay, not till the abbey is first won, Arnoul," said Du Bois. " That abbey once ours, its stores of corn and wine will help to support our people till we get them out of our present strait. The abbey is strong and well fortified, though not well manned. We hereafter can make it a tower of strength against our enemies, who are continually pouring down from Bruges. This very evening the attempt must be made; and if you make conquest of the abbey (for you can be

desperate when you like it), the next day I will give you Anna, and we will make one of the monkish drones perform the rites of marriage."

"I will do my best to gain the abbey then," replied Arnoul; "but I trust not quite so much to your word as you would have me; you have laid a snare for me. Traps snap up the young and inexperienced brood, but the old bird is not caught by them. I will have Anna safe, secured as mine, or no abbey is taken by me. Sir Simon dies this morning. Do you seize Anna in right of your guardianship; bear her off *with* us on this expedition, and I will bring up all my people to win the abbey. But unless this is done, I will not hazard my life by making a dangerous sally from Ghent upon an enterprise that must begin with passing the enemy's lines."

"Well, I agree to it," said Peter; "let us now hasten to settle our first business, and then for the abbey, and down with cowls, mass-books, and monks." Having made this agreement, the two White Hoods left the house, to prepare for the attack on the unfortunate goldsmith.

Little did Sir Simon imagine when he that morning put on his burgomaster's gown, and entered the town-hall with the two silver maces carried before him, how much mischief the gossip of his wife had prepared for him. As the worthy knight proceeded to open the affairs he had to communicate (with an air of the utmost dignity and importance,) the infamous Peter Du Bois, and his associate, Arnoul le Clerc, entered the chamber. Sir Simon was on his legs; he was about to speak, when Peter suddenly cried out "Treason! Treason!" The insurgents echoed the word, and whilst Arnoul le Clerc stabbed Sir Guisebert Grote to the heart, Du Bois struck his poignard into the body of the worthy and generous-hearted goldsmith, who fell and rolled at his feet, where he lay motionless and bleeding, whilst Peter explained to the astonished and terrified council the motives he had for destroying both these knights, and especially Sir Simon, who, to his disgraceful terms of the treaty, had added the offence of giving freedom to d'Anghien.

The council chiefly consisted of the elders of

the city. An act of such ferocious cruelty excited but one feeling of disgust and horror. But they dared not openly express their opinion. The doors of the chamber were closed, and the White Hoods, with their drawn daggers in their hands (those of Arnoul and Peter reeking with blood) surrounded them. Their own safety obliged them to silence, and this they preserved, notwithstanding their looks too plainly shewed the grief and the dismay which possessed their hearts.

After a few moments, when Du Bois had concluded his speech, Arnoul le Clerc whispered something in his ear. It was most probably an intimation that they should now hasten to seize the person of Anna, before the report of Sir Simon's death could reach her. Certain it is, that soon after the scene we have just detailed had taken place in the council, the unfortunate Anna was decoyed from her guardian's house by a person who carried her a pretended message, directing her to execute some commission for him, under the pretext that he should be delayed at the town-hall.

Ever anxious to obey him, Anna, wholly unsuspicious of the fraud, immediately followed the messenger, as she was artfully directed to do, who purposely led her into an obscure part of Ghent, where Arnoul le Clerc and his associates seized upon her, muffled her in a close hood and mantle, and placing her behind one of the White Hoods upon his horse, ere she could recover from her terror and astonishment, she thus was conveyed beyond the walls of the city. The besiegers were taken by surprise, so that Arnoul passed their line with more ease than he had expected: after this bold sally he hastened on with his party to make themselves masters of the rich abbey, where they looked to find a rare harvest of gold, corn, and wine.

In the mean time, Du Bois and his adherents had quitted the town-hall, after the infamous outrage they had there committed. The alarmed elders of the council, as soon as they were gone, proceeded to examine the bodies of their two fallen members. Sir Guisebert Grote was quite dead; Sir Simon still breathed. This last circumstance rejoiced them all, for he was

much beloved by his fellow-citizens. In order to save him, if possible, they caused him to be speedily and privately removed to one of their houses, and they agreed to spread a report of his death, in order to secure him from the malice of Du Bois.

A leech who could be trusted, was now called in, and he proceeded to do his duty in a very leech-like way; that is, he did all that he was able, and pretended to do much more. Sir Simon was put to bed, his wound dressed, and suspended animation at length restored. But the doctor (willing to enhance the merit of the cure if he lived, and to have an opportunity to lay all the mischance upon nature if he died), looked grave, spoke mysteriously, and shook his head. The shake of the head, (like that of Lord Burleigh's in the Critic,) was intended to convey to his auditors the whole substance of the doctor's thoughts, designs, and opinion, which at length ultimately amounted to this, that the case was doubtful, and that Sir Simon, like all other mortal creatures, possibly might live, or possibly might die. These mysterious looks,

hints, and shakes of the head, greatly alarmed the anxious old citizens, who were standing round the bed of their wounded friend. One of them, who thought more of the welfare of Sir Simon's soul than of his body, would have suspended all operations till a monk could be first brought to confess him. The gravity of the leech, and the violent importunity of this citizen, that Sir Simon would repent him of his sins before death, were circumstances which might perhaps have given a fatal turn to the danger of many a wounded man, by acting on the body through the medium of the mind; as it was, even Sir Simon was alarmed, as he asked with some eagerness, "how long he might yet hope to live?"

"It must depend," answered the leech, "on circumstances, and the consequences both of the nature of the wound, and of the drugs administered. I shall give you, anon, another flagon of this precious balsam. It was decocted by me at the last full moon, just as it turned upon the wane. The conjunction of the stars too was most favourable, so that, on the whole, if we can but guard against fever, there may

be some hope for you; still the danger is great, if fever ——"

"Better still confess yourself; employ the short time that may be spared to you for the good of your soul," exclaimed the citizen.

"No," said Sir Simon, with an aspect tolerably promising, and a voice rather too firm for a dying man; "if my space of life is so brief, I will make the most of it. Send for a clerk, that I may make my will, and provide for a fatherless child, and God will account that act as good a confession as I can make to wash out my sins."

The citizen looked distressed, but did not again interfere. The leech recommended a second flagon of the balsam; but Sir Simon insisted upon having the clerk called in without delay. And we shall now leave him to indite the will of the worthy goldsmith, whilst we turn to matters of a very different kind.

The abbey of St. John, that Arnoul le Clerc purposed to attack, was situated in those extensive plains which lie between Ghent and Bruges, and was one of the richest and best stored in all Flanders. In the desperate state

of their affairs, the White Hoods had long meditated the conquest of this abbey, both to possess its stores, and also to post in it such a body of their people, that it might become a place of annoyance and obstruction to the regular forces of the Earl, who were constantly coming down to assist in carrying on the siege of Ghent. Yet still this abbey was so near Bruges, so easy to be defended by the Earl's people, who might come to its support, that the enterprise had been looked upon as not only hazardous, but almost desperate. This consideration, however, did not deter Peter du Bois, who resolved to put Arnoul le Clerc upon the undertaking, so that, should the affair altogether fail, or all the men be cut off in the adventure, the whole blame and hazard of it might rest with Arnoul. How far he succeeded, by the means of giving his unhappy cousin Anna as Arnoul's reward, is already known to the reader.

Arnoul therefore set off in company with John Launoy, and a strong body of the White Hoods, to attack the abbey, and having given strict orders to some of his people, that Anna should

be held secure near the scene of action, but yet apart from danger, till the monastery was their own, he proceeded to attack it. He felt his courage rise, and his spirits revive; he felt as if the abbey was already won, and again gave farther orders, that Anna should be brought within the walls to him, as soon as he was master of them; for then he looked, that Du Bois would contrive to join him, and give him the hand of his relative. If Du Bois did not come as he had promised, Arnoul le Clerc had the prize within his own power, and he was not a man likely to relinquish it for a trifle. Arnoul marched without delay, and towards the evening of the same day on which he quitted Ghent, commenced the attack upon the abbey: it was fierce and sanguinary, for the monks resisted, and defended their house from its battled towers and walls, with a courage that shewed they were not likely to yield, but from extremity or death. The limits of our pages will not admit a full account of the transaction. Suffice it to say, that the White Hoods were the victors, and that they put to the sword nearly all of the unhappy inmates of the monastery.

Anna, as Arnoul had directed, was brought into the house after the victory, treated with some respect, considering by whom she was surrounded, and was suffered to remain quiet in a chamber alone; for, as Arnoul expected the arrival of Du Bois upon the following day, he did not even attempt to see her after the victory.

It would be difficult to describe the state of her mind during this dreadful interval. The moment she discovered that she was decoyed into the hands of Arnoul le Clerc, she guessed too well for what purpose, and his intimacy with Du Bois, his dependence upon him, induced her to believe that she never could have been thus ensnared but by the connivance of her worthless kinsman.

The small room into which Anna had been conducted to pass the night had lately been occupied by a lay brother of the monastery, who held the office of warder. It was situated in one of the flanking towers of the gateway, and overlooked the plain towards Bruges. The White Hood, who had conveyed her to this tower, was charged to provide for her comfort,

but on no account to neglect making her secure. He had brought her therefore both food and wine, with a lighted lamp, which he placed upon a table. On leaving the apartment, he locked the door, and as Anna heard his steps descend the winding stairs, her heart sunk within her.

The agony of her mind did not allow her to take rest, nor did she endeavour even to seek it. She paced up and down the apartment in a state bordering on distraction, and at length threw herself into a chair; she sat motionless and almost stupified for a time, — bewailed her fate with sighs and moans, that burst involuntarily from her bosom. These were the first expressions of her feelings; but Anna was of a character that calamity, even in its extremity, could never wholly subdue. She was also guiltless, and it is the peculiar privilege of innocence to seek comfort from God. The wicked alone despair, cast out from the saving grace of Heaven, and left to the darkness of their own night of guilt and horror. Even in this terrible hour, the still small voice of con-

science, which can whisper comfort to the soul in a dungeon, or at the moment of death, that voice which seldom speaks in vain, supported her. It whispered her to place her trust in God. Anna thought upon the promise "I will never forsake thee," and throwing herself upon her knees, she prayed ardently, not only for strength to bear her sufferings, but to be delivered from them. And who shall say that the prayers of sincerity are vain, when thus addressed to a merciful power, who hears, and who can relieve the distressed, when thus called upon with faith and hope, in charity with all mankind?

Anna arose from her devotions strengthened in her trust in Heaven. Still anxious as to the means of her deliverance, and rightly judging, that when God bestowed the faculty of reason upon mankind, it was in order that it should be exerted in all situations, where it can benefit either ourselves or others, she resolved to watch every opportunity which might present but a shadow of hope for escape, not to exhaust her remaining strength by vain regrets, or passion-

ate exclamations, and to trust to a higher power to give success to her exertions.

She now advanced towards the little narrow window which looked upon the plain. The night was stormy, whilst the clouds, driven before the wind, obscured occasionally the bright disk of the moon. The towers of Bruges could scarcely be distinguished, save by their shadowy forms; and here and there a flitting light gave the only indication that a large and populous city was so near. Anna looked out upon the scene, but not with her accustomed feelings. In more tranquil moments, like most persons endowed with imagination, she was peculiarly alive to all impressions arising from the world of nature. She was alive to the animated sensations that fill the mind when the mighty elements war together; yet most she loved the silence and serenity of the moonlight hour, when she could almost fancy that spirits of a better world visit the earth, and harmonize the scene.

But now she looked out upon the night without notice, and almost without a motive. Yet still she looked, and at length observed what seemed

a dark massive body moving forward on the plain. She thought she heard sounds in that direction, that became more audible as the loud gusts of wind paused or died away. She listened. The senses of the wretched are peculiarly acute. Again she was convinced she could distinguish sounds, that, from the plain, were advancing towards the abbey. They became louder — they drew nearer — she now heard the trampling of horses and the clink of arms. "Just Heaven!" exclaimed Anna. "I thank thee, thou hast heard my prayer, thou hast sent me a deliverer."

The blast of the trumpet now mingled with the shouts of the war-cry, "Flanders for the Lion!" "Our lady for D'Anghien!" In the next moment the massive and ponderous abbey gates groaned as it were with the force that was employed to burst them asunder; and these new assailants rushed forward to regain the very abbey that had been so recently lost.

The cause of this sudden and speedy attack had arisen from the following circumstance. When the Abbot of St. John found that the

White Hoods were bearing down to take the abbey by force, he dispatched instantly a messenger to Bruges, who, mounted on the swiftest steed, never paused till he gained that city, and implored the Earl, in the name of the Lord Abbot, that he would send immediate succour to save him and his household.

Sir Walter d'Anghien had but that hour arrived, after his perilous escape from Ghent, and, though weak from his recent wound, he begged so earnestly to be allowed to go to the assistance of the Abbot, that the Earl granted him permission to head a chosen body of men-at-arms. They immediately left Bruges; but were too late to save the monks, and could only revenge their murder.

The White Hoods, thinking themselves perfectly secure, had taken no measures of precaution, but employed themselves, after their victory, in ransacking the Abbot's cellars for a midnight carouse. They were completely taken, therefore, by surprise; many were slain, and others made prisoners, almost without striking a blow.

John Launoy, however, and a desperate band, got into the abbey church, which they managed so to secure and to defend, that the attempt to subdue them seemed almost hopeless without farther aid. Incensed, however, at the murder of the Abbot and the monks, Sir Walter's party swore to take a desperate revenge. They brought therefore all the fire-wood, which had been collected for the winter, and, piling it around the church, set it in flames. Sir Walter d'Anghien, who was employed in possessing himself of another part of the abbey, knew nothing of this transaction till it was over; he could not therefore check the fury of his people. The wretched White Hoods now ascended the tower, but in vain; for the flames rose high above the roof of the chancel, which fell in with a dreadful crash, and bursting forth, like a volcano, in the midst of darkness, as the wind tossed them high in the air, they caught at length the tower, and there was no possibility of escape for those who were within it. Some called out for ransom, others for mercy; one man offered his cloak (which was filled with the Abbot's gold)

as the price of his liberty, so he might be saved. But the infuriated assailants bade him keep the pieces to pay for a mass for the monks he had slaughtered that night, and whose souls he had sent to purgatory.

Driven to desperation, this man leapt from a window of the tower, and was received upon the swords and lances of those beneath. He was dead in a moment; and the multitude, execrating even his remains, threw the body back into the flames.

Whilst this dreadful scene was acting in the church, D'Anghien, and his own immediate followers, had a desperate onset with Arnoul le Clerc and his band. They maintained the post they had taken in the inner court with a degree of courage and resolution that in a better cause would have merited the highest praise; nor did they yield till a long and obstinate contest ended in their ruin. His people had fallen around him, Arnoul therefore now fled; but the gates were surrounded, and, scarcely knowing what he did, he attempted to screen himself by taking refuge in the very tower where Anna was con-

fined. He had reached the foot of the winding stairs, when Sir Walter d'Anghien came up with him; again they fought, and again Arnoul fled. He effected his escape from the abbey in the general confusion.

D'Anghien, prevented by darkness from pursuing his enemy, had turned to retire through the passage that led to this tower, when a shrill cry met his ear; it was a female voice imploring aid. He ascended the stairs, he burst the door, and Anna dropt senseless into his arms.

CHAP. XI.

WHILST Sir Walter d'Anghien was engaged with his men-at-arms in regaining the abbey of St. John from the White Hoods, the Earl of Flanders remained at Bruges in a state of the utmost anxiety for the safety of his nephew. Sir Walter was still weak from the effects of his wound, and though his spirit was of a nature that despised danger, and his courage such as triumphed in unequal contests, yet the Earl could not but feel that in his present state of weakness he might be more easily vanquished than at any other time; and should Sir Walter perish, Flanders would lose the bravest of her knights, and himself his most zealous and devoted kinsman.

Restless and anxious, from these apprehensions, the Earl made repeated enquiries if any intelligence had yet arrived of D'Anghien. Scout after scout was dispatched towards the

abbey of St. John, and at length Lewis de Male was relieved from his suspense by hearing that Sir Walter had completely dispossessed the abbey of the White Hoods, and was returning to Bruges with several prisoners. Soon after he arrived. As the brave young man entered the chamber, the prince rushed forward to meet him, and embracing his nephew with mingled joy and affection, he solemnly vowed, in the height of his exultation, that any thing Sir Walter should ask of him, he would grant.

"My lord," said Sir Walter, "you have made a vow hastily; but it is registered in Heaven, and cannot be recalled. And now, my dear uncle, though I have never yet demanded aught of you as a boon, yet I shall claim the fulfilment of your voluntary vow. I shall claim it on the instant."

"Do so," replied Lewis, "for to you I am indebted for the safety of my country. You alone have been able to withstand the power of these accursed White Hoods. You have besieged Ghent, and to you I look for its ultimate subjection. What would I not do then for one

to whom I owe so much? What is it you would ask? My vow is made, and it shall be strictly fulfilled, by the word of a prince and the honour of a knight."

"My lord," said Sir Walter, "I have a prisoner whom I rescued from the most imminent danger at St. John's, and whom I greatly value. But my duty to you will call me hence, and I shall have no power to protect this prisoner from the arts of Gilbert Matthew, who is a sworn enemy to the person I so much regard."

"And so," replied Lewis, "you would ask me to protect this captive in all honour and safety, since you cannot do so yourself."

"I would, my lord," said Sir Walter.

"And is this all," exclaimed the Earl, "that you would ask of me? If he should prove the greatest foe I have on earth, his honour and his safety should be guarded as my own. Bring the prisoner hither, and I will prove to you how sincere is my desire to grant you all you ask."

Sir Walter bowed, retired, and soon after returned leading in a female, wrapped in a

mantle and hood. Our readers will easily guess it was no other than the fair and unfortunate Anna. "So," said the Earl, smiling upon his nephew, "I did not dream that the good Lord Abbot of St. John held such captives in his cells, for the White Hoods surely lead no damsels with them on their wild exploits. But be she who it may, I have known how powerful are the charms of beauty, and can readily plead your excuse. Fair mistress," continued the Earl, "I have promised Sir Walter to guard and protect you in all honour, and I will gladly fulfil my vow. Deign then to cast aside those draperies, which veil your beauty as clouds do the morning sun."

Anna dared not disobey, and, modestly looking on the ground, she laid aside her mantle and hood. But who shall describe the astonishment, the rage, which overpowered the Earl when he beheld her. He stood motionless; his eyes flashing fury, and his lips quivering with emotion. He looked first at Sir Walter, and then upon Anna. At length, he vehemently stamped his foot upon the ground, as he exclaimed,

"What! Is my vow to do you a service — is it my own vow with which you entrap me. Dare you this to me? Sir Walter?" he continued, as he now addressed himself more particularly to his nephew; "dare you this to my very face, in my own palace? But you shall dearly rue it."

Sir Walter attempted to speak, but Lewis's passions were of the most violent kind, and though he was free from the cold craft of his mother's spirit, he yet partook of all her vehemence. He would not let Sir Walter plead one word in excuse, but thus continued. "Once more, I repeat it, you have laid a snare for me, into which I have fallen by the most daring duplicity, by the arts, too, of this woman; yet I will find a way to deal to you both the measure you have meted out for me. My regard to the honour of a prince, to the sanctity of an oath, will make me do for this woman all I have promised. She shall be held in safety, secured from the wiles of Gilbert Matthew, and from the bitter displeasure of the Countess my mother. Thus will my vow be accomplished. But in all things else I am her enemy and

yours. You have dared to acknowledge a high value for her; and by all you have done — all you have spoken, I know how to interpret the rest. You love her — nay, never start, you love her; and you, mistress, answer me this moment, no evasion, as you value the life of this false youth, is he dear to you? Are you affianced in faith and love to each other?"

Anna blushed, hesitated, her lips moved, and she uttered a few words so indistinctly that Lewis could not understand them. He again addressed her: "There needs no confession, — this confusion, that look, all speak the truth, the accursed truth. Now mark me, damsel, Sir Walter d'Anghien is my nephew and my ward, wholly within my power; he can make no troth to any maid, without my sanction, during his minority; he now stands within the peril of the forfeiture both of life and lands; you have beguiled him by your arts. You have both deceived me. I now, therefore, solemnly declare, and register my vow in Heaven, that if he weds you, the next hour his head shall fall beneath the axe."

"My lord," said Sir Walter, "I never designed to disobey you. I never told the maid my rank, nor my name, when I won her affections in the solitudes of St. Omer. I never intended to discover myself to her, nor to wed her, till I became the master of my own actions, and the lord of my own inheritance. Nothing but dire necessity, and the fear of her life from Gilbert Matthew's arts, now made me take advantage of your vow to gain for her the only protection within my power in these times of public danger and private cruelty."

"It is well, very well," said the Earl, in a tone of bitter irony; "so there was no one who was worthy to be tricked, to be played upon, to gain a protection for thy paramour, except thy prince; but think not that he will ever suffer thee to wed the daughter of a burgher, a rebel, and a common felon."

"Oh, my lord," said Anna, "my father is dead; he erred; but, I beseech you, spare his memory — he died penitent."

"And thou shalt live so," replied Lewis; "yes, I will keep my vow; I will now afford

this maid honourable protection. But when public tranquillity is once more restored, when the performance of my vow is no longer necessary, a convent shall hide that proud head, and teach thee how to play with princes."

Sir Walter offered to speak, but Lewis again interrupted him — "Not a word; utter but one word more in excuse, and even now I may resign her to a convent's walls — yes, and I would do it, but that convents are no longer safe, and so I should break my vow. But for thee, Sir Walter, remember, wed the maid, and death shall weave the garland to grace thy bridal honours."

Anna, shocked at these vehement threats, and anxious to save D'Anghien, now advanced, and prostrating herself at the Earl's feet, she said, "Oh, my lord, do not thus threaten your nephew; feel no wrath against him; I will be the security for his obedience; I will become the willing sacrifice to save him. I here protest, in the sight of God and man, as I kneel at your feet, that unless your own hand gives me to Sir Walter, I will never become his wife."

Sir Walter could no longer keep silence. "Oh, Anna," he exclaimed, "that rash vow has ruined me. I do not value life without you, and I have now no wish but to lose both life and the sense of my misery together. Yet," (he added, as if an idea of hope had suddenly crossed his mind,) "yet without my aid the Earl will scarcely be able to resist these daring insurgents. My lord and uncle, I will no longer anger you with words. Protect this maid in all honour as you are sworn to do. I will perish in your cause, or else," (he continued, in a voice of exultation,) "or else for Flanders, I will do some act that shall force even its proud Earl to comply with my desires."

"Do what thou wilt," said the Earl, "this damsel never shall be thine."

"Farewell, my lord," replied Sir Walter; "I will not desert my duty, though thus ill-requited. I go to serve you. Farewell, Anna, and may the Father of Mercy guard your innocence, and shelter you from all dangers. May you be happier than I am. Think of me, and pray for me, for I am truly wretched. My

lord, not to me, but to God, are you answerable for the fulfilment of your vow." Sir Walter bowed, and quitted the apartment.

Lewis, now left alone with Anna, seemed doubtful in what manner to address her. His passions were all of the most vehement kind; but his honour, in matters where his word had been pledged, was not to be shaken even by his passions, so great was his sense of a chivalrous and princely conduct. He would not, therefore, trust himself alone with her; he feared almost to look upon her, lest he should forget his duty, and stain his character by any act, which, injuring his honour, would have rendered himself despicable in his own eyes.

Thus did pride, rather than principle, afford that security to Anna, which, under any other circumstances, she could never have experienced from the hands of the Earl. He now trusted the secret of her being in the palace to his ancient nurse, an honourable person, who continued in his household more as a part of the family than as a dependent. A faithful varlet was also named to attend upon her, should she

go abroad, (concealed by her mantle and hood from observation,) during her stay in Bruges. An apartment was also assigned to her remote from that of the Countess, and in a part of the palace where it was not likely Gilbert Matthew would intrude.

It was in this obscure apartment that Anna found her refuge and concealment; she never stirred abroad, except now and then to attend mass, when she also contrived to steal a visit to the poor widow who had so humanely attended upon her during the night of her father's death.

So unforeseen, so extraordinary, are the events of human life, that Lewis de Male, who had formerly secreted Anna from his mother, and her minion, Gilbert Matthew, in order to attempt her dishonour, now followed the same line of conduct to protect her from insult and cruelty. A greater punishment could scarcely have befallen this impassioned prince, than that of having the lovely creature he had pursued at all hazards within his own power, and now to find the only check upon his lawless conduct in himself, in his own rash and voluntary vow.

Thus, not unfrequently, does Heaven make the guilty the chastisers of their own vices; and evil inclinations become the rod of a just, though tardy, punishment.

Leaving, therefore, Anna in present security, the course of our narrative obliges us to return to the affairs of Ghent, that unhappy city, to which Sir Walter d'Anghien had laid siege; a siege, that still was carried on with the utmost vigour, though the knight, at this period, was not personally engaged in it.

The distress of Ghent had risen to the most frightful extremity, famine stared the wretched inhabitants in the face, and it was now universally known, that within fifteen days time their slender stores would be exhausted, when not a drop of wine, nor a grain of corn, could be procured throughout the whole city. In this desperate state of things, Philip Von Artaveld once more essayed to make terms with Lewis de Male, and for that purpose departed to hold a conference with the council of the latter, assembled at Tournay, whither also the Duchess of Brabant, and Duke Albert of Holland, had sent their deputies to advise on the part of the Earl.

But ere Von Artaveld could return, sickness, the companion of misery, and the offspring of want, had already spread its dreadful influence through the city. Many died from mere exhaustion. Others dropped down, seized with sudden fits, that were the consequence of weakness. The streets daily exhibited scenes of wretchedness and death, scenes that would have wrung the hardest heart with pity. The poor lay in some places heaped together, and were often found dead at the doors of the inhabitants, as they arose in the morning to open them. Whenever bread was baked at the shops of the dealers in corn, it became necessary to place a strong guard of the White Hoods around them, otherwise the traders would have been torn to pieces by the famishing people. And it was only by the wise regulations and the severe laws of Von Artaveld, that the stores of the insurgents, (which were most sparingly dealt out,) had at all been found equal to support them, so as to render them efficient in strength to perform their duties.

The aged inhabitants, who were incapable of

exertion or of contest, could only obtain support by relying upon the kindness of a child, or of a friend, to bring them food for their necessities: whilst mothers, holding their sickly and fainting infants in their arms, themselves nearly famished by want, implored for them a little bread; thus placing as it were their lives at the mercy of the giver. Yet, even in this state of indescribable misery, there were not wanting wretches, fiends in a human form, who took advantage of the general distress to benefit themselves by the necessities of their fellow-creatures. One of these was Bernard Goldthrift, who, as soon as he found the scarcity of provisions promised a field for speculation, had thought less of his bonds and usuries, than he did of monopoly. He formed, therefore, many ingenious schemes to obtain a good stock of corn and wine. The infamous wretch sold these necessaries at enormous prices to private bidders, in order to avoid the severity of Von Artaveld's laws, which forbade extortion under any circumstances. To increase his golden stores, he actually submitted to a voluntary state of starvation, taking

only just so much of food as barely to support existence.

One circumstance of his nefarious traffic we cannot pass in silence. A poor woman who had a sickly child in her arms, (and three more famishing at home, with but two pieces of coin left as her whole stock of wealth in this world,) had endeavoured to obtain admission into one of the baker's shops in Ghent, in order to buy food, to delay, if possible, a day longer, the fatal sentence of death which hung over her starving offspring. But the shop was so surrounded by guards, and thronged by people, that ere she could reach it all the bread was sold, and the mob were already fighting at the doors, in the endeavour to obtain by force from each other what they had been too late to purchase.

The poor woman, who had neither strength nor inclination for such contests, remembered she had heard it whispered that Bernard Goldthrift sold bread privately to any one who would give ten times the rate which Von Artaveld had fixed as lawful. Necessity is said to have no law; no wonder then Von Arta-

veld's was often abused or wholly disregarded. She sought, therefore, the house of the usurer, who began driving his hard bargain for a couple of loaves, and a little jug of wine. The wretch himself looked gaunt with famine. His eyes were almost sunk into his head, and his temple and cheek bones were as distinctly visible as if neither flesh nor muscle remained, and nothing but a dry and withered skin was drawn across them. His step tottered, and his voice faltered. It was evident, that the monopoly of Bernard had been to satisfy his purse, but not his stomach; and that he had deprived himself of the necessaries of life, to glut his avarice.

Bernard had agreed to sell the loaves and the wine to the poor woman for one of the pieces of coin before mentioned, (the other was all she had in the world,) when his eye chancing to glance upon that other, he hastily stretched his arms over the two loaves, and swore the woman should not have them without she paid also the second piece of money. The woman remonstrated. It was useless. She thought upon her famished children, and consented to give her all

for a little bread. " I will do my best for them," said she; " we can but die when these loaves are gone."

She wrapped the bread carefully in her cloak. Bernard's ghastly features were distorted into a triumphant grin; he extended his hand to take the money, he grasped it, when instantly his countenance became livid and convulsed, he fell to the earth, and lay a stiffened corpse at the feet of her who was the object of his merciless extortion. Famine had done its work, and avarice kept its hold; for the pieces of coin were so convulsively clenched in his hand, that they could not be extracted without mutilating it, and he was buried with them in his grasp.

As the woman was retreating from the house, she observed a young man, of a noble but dejected aspect, who was on horseback, and slowly passing on towards the market-place. She crossed his path, and begged charity as she told her tale. It was Von Artaveld, and misery never pleaded to him in vain. The populace followed him, anxious to learn what terms he had to offer to them from the Earl of Flanders, and

if there was a hope of peace. Philip was attended by Du Bois, and other leaders. When he had arrived in the market-place, having taken a convenient stand, silence was obtained, and he thus addressed the people, with an air, though sorrowful, yet calm and determined.

"My friends and fellow-citizens, the sufferings of this afflicted town wound me more deeply than I have the power to tell you; but it is not in bewailing your miseries that I can hope to assuage them. I am now to address you for the last time, and when my words shall be ended, I will be the first to meet death in any shape to save you. Our affairs are desperate, since Lewis Earl of Flanders will on no terms grant us peace, unless all the male inhabitants of Ghent, between boyhood and decrepitude, leave this city, bare-headed and unarmed, and in this miserable condition present themselves before him on the adjacent plains, that he may choose such as he shall think fit to doom to death, and spare such as he may think worthy of mercy."

Heavy groans, cries, and lamentations now

burst from the assembled multitude, and loudly and tumultuously did they call upon Von Artaveld to save them, to direct them what to do.

"There is but one alternative," said Von Artaveld, "for I have already offered my head to the Earl of Flanders, if that could have appeased the wrath he cherishes against you. But my life is insufficient to satisfy our offended lord. Hear me, then, fellow-citizens, if you are resolved not to accede to the Earl's proposal, you may yet die in the bosom of the church, for die you must, by famine or by the sword. Confess yourselves to God, retire into the holy sanctuaries of this city, and there patiently await the lingering death of famine. God will have mercy on your souls. Will you do this?"

"No, no; think of some way to save us — preserve Ghent — be our friend; we will obey Von Artaveld — we will follow Von Artaveld, we will die with him, but not by famine." These and many similar expressions again burst from the multitude.

"I thank God that you are willing to follow me," exclaimed Von Artaveld, "for he will

guide our steps to victory. Hear my plan. It is the determination of a desperate man, one whom necessity has rendered reckless. We will not yield ourselves, like cowards and slaves. If we must perish, we will die as brave men should do, in the support of our quarrel. The Earl of Flanders is in Bruges, guarded by his knights, and supported by his citizens. Let us no longer tarry within our walls to die like famished dogs. Let us, ere to-morrow's sun can reach the centre of the heavens, let us sally forth, every man capable of bearing arms, and attack the Earl even in the very heart of Bruges. Victory may yet be ours; and should you think such an enterprise desperate, look, my friends, upon our fathers, our wives, and our children; look upon them as they fall daily around us with misery and want, and then ask yourselves what you *dare do*. I draw this sword for Ghent, and never will I sheath it till Ghent is delivered from her misery, and freed from oppression. Let those, therefore, who would live to rejoice with her, or perish to save her, let them follow me."

Von Artaveld ceased, and retired from the

market-place amidst the shouts and tumults of the enthusiastic multitude, who swore with one voice to follow him, and to perish with him. The plan was soon arranged—not a moment was lost in preparation. Five thousand men capable of bearing arms were instantly summoned to be ready to march for Bruges on the following morning; and so great was the distress of the city, that although these desperate insurgents loaded two hundred carts with cannon and artillery, they could only be supplied with sufficient provision to last them for one day.

When the hour arrived for their departure, the grief and agony of the friends they left behind exceeded all powers of description. Wives, parents, children, clung around the necks of their nearest and dearest friends, imploring them not to return, without they could bring to their starving city some relief; and in the despair of that trying hour, they vowed that should the White Hoods fall, they would close their gates, fire the city, and perish in its flames; so that a blackened heap of ashes should be all that remained to point to Flanders where once stood the noble city of their fathers.

The White Hoods departed fully armed, and led on by Von Artaveld, amidst the prayers, the ardent wishes, and the lamentations of the wretched people they were to leave within their homes; they passed the gates of Ghent to re-enter them as deliverers, or never more to look upon their walls.

CHAP. XII.

When, on the day after he left Ghent, Philip Von Artaveld had arrived near Bruges, his first care was to choose an advantageous spot, where his people might encamp with safety for the night. As it was but now noon, he considered there was time enough to effect his purpose, since it was not likely the general combat would take place on the present day. He halted his small army upon the summit of a gentle eminence, defended in front (facing the city of Bruges) by a marsh, and guarded in the rear by the baggage carts that had conveyed the artillery, &c. He then caused his encampment to be made of *ribaudeaux*, or tall stakes with iron points, that were thrust into the ground.

When these means of present security had been effected, Philip ordered mass to be said, and several monks, who had accompanied the expedition, afterwards exhorted the men of

Ghent to trust in God, the Virgin, and the justice of their cause, for its success. Philip also addressed the people, shewing them, in a speech of much animation, how great were their injuries, how often they had endeavoured to obtain an honourable peace, and how desperate was the state of their affairs. He then concluded with conjuring them each to a man, to prove themselves worthy of the name of Ghent; and pointing to the scanty supply of provisions now about to be distributed, he said, "This, my friends, is our last meal; for, after this, would you save yourselves from famine, you must gain the means by conquest, or fall in the attempt."

The men were then ordered to partake of their slender repast, and, this ended, to hold themselves in readiness for whatever might ensue. The strict discipline of Von Artaveld, when he commanded in person, brought into his army that degree of order, regularity, and submission, so necessary to the achievement of an object that required at once prudence, vigilance, and courage.

While these circumstances were passing in

the camp of the insurgents, all Bruges was busily employed in hasty preparations to encounter their paltry foes; for in such contempt did they hold them, that they only laughed at the madness of a body of five thousand starving men, who had dared venture forth to offer battle to at least forty thousand persons, who were in readiness to receive them. It is true, that the greater part of this vast number consisted of artisans and citizens of Bruges, since the lances and men at arms who were now with the Earl did not in all amount to more than eight hundred; these eight hundred drew up before the palace of Lewis de Male, ready to obey his orders, as the various bands of citizens hastened from all quarters of the town to join them, alarmed by the shouts of the populace, and the ringing of all the bells in the different churches and convents of Bruges, that summoned them, as well as the trumpets of the heralds, to rally round the banner of their lord.

The men of Bruges, never warlike as their neighbours of Ghent, rejoiced in the opportunity which now offered itself of gaining both honour

and victory at so cheap a rate. "For what," said they, "could five thousand famished people do against forty thousand well-conditioned citizens, armed and safely lodged within the defences of their own town." They already enjoyed their triumph, and made jests upon the defeat of their foes, who, they said, had thus brought their ears to have them clipped off under the walls of Bruges; and so much were they elevated by their supposed victory, and the contempt in which they held their enemies, that they grew careless and insolent, declaring they would make a sally and carve up their foes before they carved their suppers.

This disposition of the citizens was soon made known to the Earl of Flanders, whilst he was preparing to join his knights and men at arms. Sir Walter d'Anghien (who had hastily been called from the defence of a fortress near Bruges) had but that moment arrived at the palace. Whatever were his private feelings, he never suffered them to interfere with his public duties, and he now earnestly entreated the Earl to prevent, if possible, the citizens

from sallying forth that evening to give battle to the enemy. "I hold such a measure to be dangerous," said Sir Walter; "our foes are advantageously encamped; the sun is almost set, and we shall have darkness upon us before we can accomplish their defeat; and although our citizens of Bruges are forty thousand in number, yet I consider one thousand of such desperate men as those of Ghent to be worth them all, especially when led on by Von Artaveld. The men of Ghent are brave and warlike; in Bruges valour lies in the tongue. To-morrow we shall have the day before us, and as it is said that our foes have eaten their last meal, hunger will by that time have considerably weakened their powers of exertion, and they will of necessity be obliged to quit their present position, when they may be easily vanquished. The advantage will be on our side if we combat to-morrow, but it is on theirs if we do so to-night."

The Earl approved the prudent advice of Sir Walter d'Anghien, and endeavoured to enforce it. But so great was the conceit and the presumption of the citizens of Bruges that

ere Lewis could issue his orders to combat on the morrow, several hundreds of his people had already advanced beyond the gates of the town, and, without either order or design, prepared for contest, dragging with them those pieces of cannon which might have been employed to far greater advantage had they been stationed on the city walls.

The commands of Lewis de Male were treated even with contempt, and many of the leading citizens went so far as to say that the Earl and his knights might, if they chose it, go home to bed, and leave them to baffle their enemies. In this disorderly state of things, Lewis de Male and Sir Walter d'Anghien did the best they could do to direct their own men-at-arms, and to form them into regular order for the combat. These prudent and necessary measures, however, were not only interrupted, but rendered even useless by the extremity of folly in the citizens. Amongst them was the burgomaster who had performed the part of Adam in the mystery; his conceit now shone conspicuous, and he resolved to take the lead amongst his fellows.

Actuated by this motive, the first thing he did was to express his indignation that any delay of measures should take place on the ground of awaiting the return of certain scouts sent out by Sir Walter d'Anghien to reconnoitre the enemy. Without, therefore, awaiting their return, he instantly led on, exclaiming to his band, "Come, my lads, let us show our spirit, and begin the work at once; if nobody else will, we will set the example; as for the Earl and Sir Walter, if they like fighting best by day-light, let them go their own way to work, but we will have no such cowardly delays; and I have a special wish to begin the business, since one of those rascally Ghent leaders stole, and marched off with as good a tail and pair of horns of my own, as ever belonged to a citizen, when I lent them to him to perform the devil's part in the mumming. Come, what say you, my masters, shall we put a match to this cannon, and let it fly against yon hill where our foes are encamped, shall we do it?"

"With all my heart," answered a pert jerkin-maker's apprentice, who belonged to this

worshipful company of engineers; "give me the match, and so here goes for the devil's tail and horns," and saying this, he applied the match to the touch-hole and fired it; a signal for beginning hostilities that was instantly taken up by the rest, some of whom discharged the other pieces, whilst many let fly their arrows; not one of them could level the pieces they discharged; their cannon injured nothing but the greensward of the base of the eminence where their enemies were encamped.

Von Artaveld saw their folly, and knew how to seize upon the moment for acting with advantage. Causing, therefore, the banner of Ghent to be unfurled, he gave the signal, and in another moment three hundred cannon (already levelled and prepared) were discharged, sweeping down whole ranks at a blow. Von Artaveld lost not an instant in following up the advantage afforded him by the general panic that had now seized upon the people. The White Hoods rushed down upon them, shouting their war cry of "Ghent! Ghent! The White Hood! The White Hood!" The cowardly

citizens threw down their staves, and began to fly in all directions, intercepting one another in the distraction of their retreat, tumbling in heaps together, and literally crouching like dogs before their assailants; or rather, they might be compared to curs, that yelp at those who threaten them from a distance, but hang their tails and run away when pursued.

To describe the anger, the vexation, the astonishment of the Earl and Sir Walter at such dastardly conduct would be impossible. They resolved to make a stand, and either to succeed in stemming the torrent of their foes that poured down upon them in all directions, or to fall in the attempt. Once more they endeavoured to form their men-at-arms into a compact body, so as to prevent the entrance of Von Artaveld and his people into Bruges; but even this measure was rendered ineffectual by the citizens, who so crowded round the Earl and Sir Walter to save themselves, and so hampered their operations, that in order to attack, or even to resist, the men of Ghent, they must

at first have fallen upon those of Bruges. Thus obstructed and encumbered, they could do nothing; and, excepting the knights who bore them company, their own bands at length took the general alarm, and fled, like the rest, in all directions.

Sir Walter d'Anghien now perceived, that surrounded by such a host of daring assailants, with no support excepting what might be found in a few brave knights, all resistance must ultimately prove vain. He was desirous to preserve the life of the Earl. Lewis was now in danger. D'Anghien forgot all his own injuries, and, conjuring his uncle to return to the palace, he proposed there to make a stand, and if possible to attempt to close the gates of the city. The Earl, seeing how desperate was his situation, followed this advice, and setting spurs to his horse, hastily retreated towards the palace. D'Anghien attempted to secure the gates. But the dastardly citizens had so neglected their own preservation, that one of the principal gates had been torn from its hinges and destroyed;

the White Hoods, therefore, with ease poured into the city, dealing death and confusion all around them.

Whilst these events were passing, Gilbert Matthew had learnt what turn the combat was likely to take, and, anxious to preserve his own life, (for he could expect no mercy from a White Hood,) under a pretext of ensuring the safety of the Countess of Artois, he persuaded her to mount a swift horse, and attended only by himself and a few of her people, to make her escape by one of the postern gates that led from Bruges into the plains towards Lille; assuring her, that by reaching Lille she could more effectually serve her son than by remaining to become a prisoner where she was. The Countess fled, in the hope to raise succours for Lewis; Gilbert Matthew ran away, as all cowards do, for no motive but that of preserving a life already useless. They were gone before the Earl could gain the palace.

During the general consternation, Anna was warned by her aged attendant to seek safety by flight. This woman had become attached to

her young charge, for in every honest breast Anna found a friend. She had heard exaggerated accounts of what had passed in the combat, and was assured that every person found within the palace would be put to the sword. Too old to fly herself, she resolved, if possible, to save Anna, and to induce her immediately to quit a place where danger was inevitable.

Anna, on hearing this, no longer thought of herself, or if she did, she thought *her* life was in no danger from the White Hoods, since she was known to most of the leaders of that party as the daughter of the deceased John Lyon. But she feared for Sir Walter d'Anghien; she had heard of his return, and that all his efforts to save the city had proved vain. He, perhaps, might suffer death; the very thought of this filled her with terror and consternation. She felt too for Lewis de Male, since, however unjust and even cruel his conduct had been to her, he had nevertheless kept sacred the promise he made to afford her honourable protection; and "kindness, ever nobler than revenge," now pleaded for him. She thought that could

she but be instrumental in saving her prince, as well as her beloved Sir Walter, it would be a generous act. Anna resolved to attempt it.

A great mind in peril is most truly compared to the oak amidst the storm. Weaker bodies bow before it; but the oak stands firm, and resists its fury; it braves the contest of the elements, and either flourishes uninjured when they have sunk to rest, or if it falls, falls never to rise again. Anna's mind was of this character. She summoned all her fortitude to her aid; and hoping that could she but see Von Artaveld, who she knew to be noble in his nature, she might induce him to save the lives of the Earl and of Sir Walter, she resolved, notwithstanding her own danger, and the horror of the time, to seek Von Artaveld.

Her resolution may be deemed desperate; but the danger which prompted it appeared to her inevitable, and she was ever enthusiastic in a good cause. Hers was a generous feeling of self-devotion — that heroism and true courage which, in moments of peril, raises the female mind above the supposed weakness of its nature,

above the petty fears so common to the sex. Anna now wrapped her large black mantle close around her, and snatching up a cloak which she found in the apartment, thinking that, should she meet the Earl or Sir Walter, it might stand them in stead in a moment of necessity, she quitted her chamber with a quick step, her heart full of anxiety, yet in her deportment, calm, firm, and collected. She left the palace by a private door, and endeavoured to make her way into the public streets.

The night was totally dark, and the surrounding objects were alone visible by the blaze of a few torches, which here and there gleamed around, and partially exhibited some sight of horror, the agonised and distorted features of the dying, or heaps of the fallen and pallid dead. The shouts of the victors, the clash of arms, the groans of the wounded, with shrieks of terror, united in fearful and continued discord. That part of the city which had been fired by the White Hoods, now suddenly exhibited the horrors of a conflagration, which threatened to reduce the whole city into one heap of ashes.

The flames ascended high in the air, spreading their broad red fires in every direction, and for a time dispelling the surrounding darkness, but in a manner so as to make every object more fearful, by shewing distinctly the full extent of the misery.

The white hood, the well-known symbol of the insurgents, soon attracted the eyes of Anna, and she resolved to make her way towards a band of these men, who were assembled together, and to demand that she might instantly be conducted to their chief. She knew well the power of Von Artaveld's name, that but to pronounce it acted like a spell even upon the boldest ruffian of his party. To declare herself his friend, as having once been under his protection, she was assured would obtain for her a compliance with her demand; and when in his presence, she knew she had nothing to fear for herself, and that she had much to hope for those she was so anxious to save.

With this intent she still endeavoured to make her way through the crowd, and had nearly reached the spot where she purposed addressing

the White Hoods, when some remarkable words, uttered by a man who belonged to them, struck upon her ear, and she paused for a moment to listen.

"I say," exclaimed this man, to one of his companions, "there will be neither peace nor safety for Ghent while Lewis lives. Von Artaveld would fain make him a prisoner and spare his life; but I and Peter du Bois are for being rid of him at once, and that is the wiser and the surer way. So follow me, my friends, for I hear the Earl has just returned to the palace, and that he is about to leave it again, in order to summon the citizens to rally round him, and to make a stand. Now is our time therefore. We will go cautiously to work. We will beset the streets so that he cannot escape or pass down any one of them, and we may then entrap him and kill him at our own pleasure; for though Von Artaveld has issued orders that he, as well as Sir Walter d'Anghien, should be spared, yet who is to obey such orders in the dark; how are we to know the Earl from another man? Lewis is mounted on horseback. Murder

every one you find upon a horse, and you are sure of him."

"It is well spoken," said another of the White Hoods; "and Du Bois will bear us out if we do so. Let us about it immediately; let every man take his post. I will fix my stand at the corner of this street, and, remember friends, whoever is seen coming forward upon a horse, let the horseman be slain instantly without mercy."

Anna staid to hear no more; her close black mantle had effectually concealed her from observation, and she instantly quitted the spot, and retraced her steps towards the palace with breathless speed. She then went direct into the square or court-yard before the entrance. She now perceived a number of lighted torches borne by the Earl's people, who stood about him. Lewis was at the moment enquiring for Sir Walter d'Anghien. He was told that his nephew had gone, on assurance of safety, to hold a personal conference with Von Artaveld, in the hope that some arrangement might be made — some terms offered, to stop the effusion of blood, and the terrors of the present hour.

Anna heard of Sir Walter's safety with thankfulness; she now thought only of saving the Earl from a fate that would overtake him before Sir Walter or Von Artaveld could make any terms for his preservation. Without losing a moment, she rushed forward, and caught the rein of the Earl's charger, at the very instant he was about to turn the animal's head, in order to quit the spot. "Oh, my lord!" she exclaimed, "dismount, dismount, and save yourself; there are some hundreds of the White Hoods who lay in wait for you, who, even now, perhaps, are pressing on towards the palace, with the intent to murder you. They have placed a guard at the avenue of every street; it is impossible you should escape — it is madness if you resist them. They are a host in number compared to your own people. Dismount, and save yourself. I have heard all their plans. Do not tempt Providence by a desperate resistance. Dismount, and save yourself."

"What is it you tell me?" said the Earl; "and how is it, maiden, that you, whom I thought secure within the palace, have gained intelligence of so much danger lurking near?"

"There is no time for parley," replied Anna; "the least delay may cost you your life. Believe me, my words are true. It is from the White Hoods themselves that I have learnt their dreadful intents; once more, I conjure you to dismount, and to preserve your life."

Struck with the vehemence of her manner, Lewis obeyed her, and sprang from his horse. He had scarcely done so, when a page of his household ran, pale and affrighted, towards him, and exclaimed, "Oh, my lord! save yourself; you are betrayed; a band of men are advancing towards the palace; they come to take your life."

At hearing these words Lewis ordered all the torches to be extinguished; this was instantly done. He then directed the small company of his attendants to disperse, and to save themselves as they best could. To be *near him*, he feared, would prove their ruin. "And now," said he, turning to Anna, "who shall protect thee?"

"Fear not for me, my lord," said Anna, "my life is in no danger, since I am the daughter of a White Hood, but think to save yourself."

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"Fear not for me, my lord," said Anna, "my life is in no danger, since I am the daughter of a White Hood, but think to save yourself."

"My life is at its close already," replied Lewis; "for, so help me Heaven, I know not at this moment where to hide my head for safety."

"Are you so friendless, so destitute of all resource?" said Anna; "then follow me, my lord, and I will attempt your preservation. Here," she continued, "cast off your robe, put on this cloak, muffle it close round your head; be silent, follow my steps, and may God direct them for your safety." Overcome by her emotions, Anna could not utter another word; she pressed her hands together, raised her eyes towards Heaven, and walked swiftly forward followed by the Earl. In a few seconds they had cleared the court-yard of the palace.

Lewis had almost mechanically obeyed her directions. So vehement had been her manner, and so sudden the execution of her purpose, that he had merely followed the impulse of the moment, without any fixed intention, almost without a hope. Muffled in the cloak and hood, the Earl attended his fair guide, never doubting her sincere desire to preserve him, but

wondering by what means she would attempt it. There was no opportunity to enquire, for the least word, the slightest circumstance, might have betrayed the prince, as he passed amidst a multitude of people, who pressed on towards the palace.

The shouts of the advancing White Hoods now met his ear, and turning down a narrow passage that opened upon one of the streets of Bruges, Anna was suddenly stopt by an insurgent, who demanded of her, who she was and whither she went. "No one passes through this outlet," said the man, "without my leave; so damsel, please to let me know who you are, and who that fellow is that hangs as close at your skirts as if he were tied to them. I am ordered here on duty, and it is worth as much as my head to let you pass without knowing who you are."

"Why, Martin," said Anna, recollecting the voice of the good-natured centinel in the White Hood who addressed her — "why, Martin, you well know me, and that I was in the house of

Von Artaveld before I was decoyed away from the protection of Sir Simon de Bête. You may let me pass without fear, I am a White Hood's daughter."

"Aye, aye, lady," said Martin, "I know you, well enough now I hear you speak, and I may let you pass," he continued, in a lower voice, "as I did once before, when you helped to let imprisoned birds slip the cage; but I see how it is,some such thing now—well,well, the Saints love you, if you are not the kindest sweetheart that ever man had; I say no more. I spoil no true love business, so there—I turn my back, and while I do so, do you pass on with your muffled paramour, and I will not ask who he is, nor say a word about it."

Thus did Martin, in his rough but good-natured way, facilitate the escape of the Earl of Flanders, at a time when the least delay must have cost him his life, for a band of the White Hoods was advancing towards the palace, and as they did so, they caught a glimpse of two persons retiring hastily down this passage where

Martin kept watch. They deliberated a moment, and seemed doubtful if they should or should not pursue them. Anna observed their hesitation, and passed yet more quickly forward. In a few minutes she stopt before the door of a small house at the extremity of the passage. She then gently struck upon it. The door was opened by a poor, but honest looking woman, who demanded, in a voice that expressed apprehension, "what she wanted at that hour of the night?"

"Admit us, my kind friend, I beseech you," said Anna. "Do you not remember the unhappy maiden whose father you attended in his dying hour?"

"What," said the woman, "are you the daughter of John Lyon, and abroad in such a night as this is, in Bruges? Indeed, maiden, I can never forget you nor your distress. I often pray for you, for, like my own children, I know that you are fatherless."

"You have a kind heart," replied Anna, "and the widow's sorrows teach her to feel for the

distresses of others. I conjure you to conceal this gentleman. He is of the palace, and the White Hoods, who are the masters of the city, pursue him to take away his life. Save him, I implore you; give him shelter but for this night. I know not where else to guide him, nor to whom else his preservation may be trusted."

"Woman," said Lewis, as he threw back the hood that had enveloped his head, "look upon me. I am thy lord, the Earl of Flanders; my life is in thy power."

"Holy Virgin!" exclaimed the widow, as she raised her hands and eyes, "I know you indeed, my lord, you are the prince. Yet how can I protect you? Old and poor, with nothing but this miserable lodging, how can I protect you? Yet I will do my best, for I have often taken alms at your gates, and the bounty to the widow and the fatherless shall not be repaid with ingratitude. Here, my lord," she continued, "ascend this ladder; my children sleep above; conceal yourself as you may under-

neath the bed. Haste you, be quick, for surely I hear a tumult in the street — yes, there are people coming this way — lose not a moment, hasten to the chamber, I will follow you, and do my best to hide you and to save you."

The Earl of Flanders delayed not a moment to obey her instructions. He ascended the ladder, and hastily crept under the wretched bed. The honest widow adjusted such coverings as the place afforded to hide him from observation, and soon after returned to Anna, who was anxiously waiting for her below, as she sat muffled in her mantle by the side of the fireplace, where a few embers were mouldering upon the hearth.

The widow now took her youngest child, who lay in a cradle, in her arms, and placing herself opposite to Anna, was soon employed in nursing the little creature, and in endeavouring once more to lull it to rest, for the infant, disturbed by the entrance of strangers, had been awakened and affrighted out of its sleep.

In a short time the tumult in the street increased, and the door of the house was violently burst open. Several White Hoods, bearing weapons in their hands, now rushed in, and demanded of the woman that she would let them see the man who had but lately entered her dwelling.

"Alas!" said she, "what man would you seek here? or why do you come with violence and threats to a poor widow with a family of small children?"

"Some one entered here not long ago," continued the insurgent; "we saw him pass in. Give him up to us, or it shall be worse for you."

"I passed in myself not long ago, and this young damsel with me," replied the widow. "Look round this room, it is small enough and poor enough, God knows. Who could it conceal?"

"But here is a ladder," said another of the insurgents; "we will soon see where that leads to. The Earl of Flanders has escaped from

his palace, and a man muffled in a cloak was traced to this house. We suspect it was the Earl. Give me the lamp, woman — I will ascend the ladder."

"Oh, do not, do not," exclaimed the woman "my children sleep above."

"Do not?" rejoined the White Hood, "nay, then, if that is your request, I *must* ascend, for children could not be mistaken for men; so you had nothing to fear for them."

Anna saw the imprudence of the poor woman, and that it was likely to betray the Earl; she therefore started up, seized the lamp, and, turning towards the insurgent, she said, "Follow me, then, friend, you shall be satisfied; but the good widow fears her children may be frighted if you disturb them in their sleep." Anna held the lamp with a steady hand, and ascended the ladder, followed by the White Hood, whilst the rest of his band remained below, still holding their naked weapons in their hands, and ready for the work of death, should Lewis be discovered.

"Look round," said Anna, to the ruffian who was her companion, as she entered the apartment; "what do you find here?" and, advancing towards the bed, she held the lamp over the sleeping children, yet so as to avoid suffering its beams to fall towards the bottom of the bed. "There," she continued, "there lie the widow's treasures and her cares, safely guarded, whilst they slumber, by him who is the Father of the fatherless. Are you satisfied?"

"There is nothing here," answered the man surlily, and he turned to descend. "The devil, I think," said he, "has got Lewis before his time; for I could have sworn that I saw a man, with a muffler about him, enter here but just now."

"I have on a muffler," said Anna, "for so you may call my mantle, and I entered but just now; come, let us descend."

"Aye," replied the man; "but first, with your leave, I will see you without that same muffler; so uncloak, dame or damsel, and let me

see if you be such as a man may look upon without being sorry for his pains."

"Descend," said Anna, "and I will draw aside my mantle below; your comrades wait for you;" and so saying, she swiftly past forward, still carefully holding the lamp so that it might be shaded by a portion of the drapery she wore about her. She contrived to be the first to descend into the room below. The ruffian paused at the top of the steps. "Hold up the lamp," said he, to Anna; "do you leave such visitors as we are to break our necks in the dark?"

Anna trembled when she heard these words, lest the rays of light should fall towards the floor of the chamber, but she dared not disobey. At length the man descended the ladder without suspicion. "And now, damsel," said he, "let us see your face; who are you?"

"One of your own people," boldly answered Anna; "and one whom Von Artaveld protected, as your comrade there, honest Martin,

can avouch. I beseech you, therefore, that you will suffer me to remain as private as I desire to be. Von Artaveld would suffer no insult to be offered to me."

Martin, who had been dragged along with the other White Hoods in search of the Earl of Flanders, and who really suspected Anna had somehow or other managed to conceal Sir Walter d'Anghien, (never dreaming that her protection had been shewn to the Earl himself,) now advanced, and said, that he knew the damsel had been well cared for by Von Artaveld at Ghent, and he was sure that his master had a great value for her, and so, he supposed, she had followed him to Bruges.

The White Hoods laughed at Martin's account, and offered one or two jests upon the subject. At length the leading ruffian proposed to depart: "Come along," said he, to the rest; "we must search farther; we do but lose time here. Lewis must not escape with life; and as for Von Artaveld, he is a brave captain, and so he may have as many damsels as he pleases, and

we all know that he loves a fair maiden as well as a bow-string or a battle."

So saying, the man quitted the house, attended by his companions. Anna and the poor widow rejoiced at their departure. The latter now hastened to the Earl, in order to concert measures with him for his security, as it was absolutely necessary that he should remove from Bruges early on the following morning, since his life was hourly in danger as long as he remained in that city.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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